

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GENERIC PRONOUNS IN CURRENT ACADEMIC WRITING

A dissertation submitted to

The Faculty of Arts

The Department of English Language

In candidacy for the degree of Master of Philosophy by Research

BY

© BEATA OZIEBLOWSKA

AUGUST, 1994

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GENERIC PROPOSALS IN CURRENT ACADEMIC WRITING

A dissertation submitted in

partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences

by
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in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences

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A B S T R A C T

This dissertation is concerned with third-person singular pronouns used in sex-indefinite references, that is references to people, without specifying their sex. Pronouns which do not specify sex are traditionally called "generic", because generic statements about human referents discuss people in general, and therefore the sex of the referents is irrelevant. Generic pronouns are a feature of English which is currently undergoing substantial change and is a topical issue because of the present attempts to use language devoid of sexual bias. However, despite much publicity on the subject, there has been relatively little attention directed towards the generic phenomenon based on real-language data.

This study looks at the extent of change in generic pronoun usage, but is mostly concerned with the generic as a grammatical and discourse phenomenon. The analysis is based on a corpus of real-language examples of generics collected from academic writing. The examples are looked at in context, which provides information about factors which might be responsible for the choice of a given pronoun as a generic. The study reveals that the generic should not be discussed merely from the point of view of "sexist/nonsexist language", but in terms of gradience of genericity, depending on different factors, like stylistic devices found in context or kind of reference.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	v
PREFACE	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
INTRODUCTION	
A The background	1
B Some definitions of the terms used in this dissertation	
i) Gender and sex	8
ii) Generic and specific	12
iii) "Indefinite generic" and "indefinite specific" pronouns	15
iv) Generalisation, exemplification and instantiasation	20
v) Hypercorrection	22
 CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM WITH THE GENERIC MASCULINE AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	
1.1 The background to the problem	24
1.2 Why is the masculine he criticised as a generic?	29
1.3 Solutions to the generic problem	37
 CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY OF PAST RESEARCH	
2.1 Research on generic pronouns	53
2.1.1 Opinions on the sexist/non-sexist language	56
2.1.2 Are generics understood generically?	59
2.1.3 What generic forms are used?	64
 CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Aims and general provisos	73
3.2 The corpus and the method	79

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

4.1	General remarks	88
4.2	The analysis of examples according to authors and domain	
4.2.1	Economics	90
4.2.2	Law	104
4.2.3	Linguistics	119
4.2.4	Medicine	129
4.2.5	Social sciences, psychology and sociology	140
4.3	Ambiguous cases	153
4.4	Different categories of antecedents	
4.4.1	Syntactic characteristics of antecedents	157
	a) Noun phrases as antecedents	158
	b) Pronouns as antecedents	159
4.4.2	Semantic characteristics of antecedents	161
	a) Male-related category	161
	b) Female-related category	164
	c) Neutral category	164
4.5	Can authors' pronoun choice be influenced by editorial policies? ...	170
	a) A survey among publishers	171
	b) A discussion of books in the corpus according to publishers ..	174

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1	Summary of the findings	178
5.1.1	Pronoun forms used as generics	179
	i) The masculine <i>he</i>	179
	ii) The feminine <i>she</i>	179
	iii) The neuter <i>it</i>	180
	iv) The dual-gender pronoun	180
	v) The plural <i>they</i>	182
5.1.2	Possible reasons for the variation of different pronoun forms	183
	a) Syntactic characteristics of the antecedent	184
	b) Stereotyping	185
	c) References to other texts	187
	d) The choice of stylistic devices in the context	188
	e) Projecting one's own sex	191
	f) Pronouns reflect reality	192
	g) Kind of reference: generalisations and exemplifications	193
5.2	The picture of the generic phenomenon in the light of the findings	194
5.2.1	Is the reference made to a generic or to a specific person?	195
5.2.2	Is the reference gender-neutral or gender-specific?	197

5.3	The uses of the sex-indefinite forms	
5.3.1	References to hypothetical non-specific referents	199
a)	Generalisations	199
b)	Exemplifications	200
5.3.2	References to specific individuals	201
a)	The referent's sex is not known	201
b)	The person's sex is ambiguous	202
c)	A reference to a/each person who is a representative of a particular real-case group	203
5.4	Implications of the findings	203
5.4.1	Gradience of genericity?	205
5.4.2	Is 'generics in English' only a problem of sexist language?	207
5.5	Implications for future research	208
5.6	Summary	210
APPENDIX 1		211
APPENDIX 2		223
TABLES		231
FIGURES		237
BIBLIOGRAPHY		241

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES: Frequency of generic pronouns found in different domains

TABLE 1.	Economics	232
TABLE 2.	Law	233
TABLE 3.	Linguistics	234
TABLE 4.	Medicine	235
TABLE 5.	Social sciences, sociology and psychology	236

FIGURES

FIGURE 1.	Generic and specific reference	238
FIGURE 2.	Generic antecedents	239
FIGURE 3.	Examples illustrating the gradience of genericity	240

P R E F A C E

"If someone were a feminist, he would support equality for women"
What would a feminist say about this... ?

ANSWER: A problem - while we cannot assume that all feminists are female there is no one pronoun which includes both *he* and *she* to cover all persons regardless of sex.

(Bowers et al 1987: 3, 75) *Talking about grammar*

The answer above summarises the main subject of this dissertation, which aims to see which pronouns are used by writers to mean both *he* and *she*.

The introduction presents a general background to the problem with a particular stress on the present-day concerns over the ideological implications of sexism in language, discussed in various articles, stylebooks, language guidelines. Part B of the introduction presents definitions and discussion of terms used in this dissertation.

Chapter 1 is devoted to the discussion of the pronominal forms which can be used to refer to both sexes. The main emphasis is put on the masculine pronominal, which has been advocated since last century, but whose prescription was one of the reasons for the concern over sexist language during the last decades. Section 1.1 analyses why there is a need for a neutral pronominal and provides some historical background. Section 1.2 lists criticisms of the masculine in the generic/sex-indefinite function, which have been put forward by various scholars, especially feminist scholars, but which has often been supported by results of research. Section 1.3 discusses in detail the proposed techniques to avoid the use of the masculine.

Chapter 2 offers a summary of some of the best-known research on the generic issue; both the methods used and the results achieved. The three sections discuss three major areas of research. Section 2.1.1 lists surveys

among users of English or the results of the examination of grammar books or stylebooks, which can reveal the extent to which language users are aware of the sexist issue. Section 2.1.2 describes different kinds of experiments which aimed to show whether generics, especially the generic masculine and the generic "man", are understood generically. Finally, section 2.1.3 discusses the corpora collected by other researchers.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology used in this research. Section 3.1 lists the main aims of this research. A special emphasis is put on the importance of studying examples in context. Section 3.2 describes the corpus and the method I used.

The analysis of the findings is carried out in Chapter 4. Section 4.2 discusses the pronouns used by different authors, according to domain. There is also an extra section on ambiguous examples (section 4.3). Section 4.4 describes different categories of antecedents found; a) semantic (e.g. female-related or male-related) to see whether the pronoun usage reflects social stereotyping and b) syntactic (e.g. indefinite pronouns, or noun phrases with different modifiers) which might also be responsible for the choice of the specific pronoun. Finally, section 4.5 discusses the results of the survey on generic pronouns which I conducted among several British publishing houses.

Chapter 5 is a summary of the findings and the conclusions. Section 5.1.1 lists pronouns found in generic/sex-indefinite contexts and the antecedents with which these pronouns are typically used. As most authors do not have one particular pronoun policy, it seemed crucial to look for different factors which might explain variation of pronoun forms. Such factors, e.g. the syntactic characteristics of the antecedent, stereotyping, context, kind of reference, etc. are discussed in section 5.1.2. The following sections depict some of the problematic areas which appeared in the process of collecting and

analysing the language data; sometimes it was difficult to classify a given pronoun reference as generic or specific, or gender-neutral or gender-specific. Section 5.3 describes the uses of generic/sex-indefinite forms. Implications of the findings are summarised in section 5.4. Finally, section 5.5 suggests directions for further research, which is followed by a short summary of this research in section 5.6.

Although generics have generated most interest as an ideological issue, the topic requires as much attention as a grammatical phenomenon. Studying references to people of unidentified sex reveals the existence of what might be called "gradience of genericity". This phenomenon is worthy of further detailed investigation.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Dr Catherine Emmott, for her incommensurate help, which went beyond the limits of simple supervision.

I am also grateful to the editors from different British publishing houses, who have kindly supplied me with valuable information about publishers' pronoun policies.

I wish to thank all who have supported me in writing this dissertation, first and foremost, my husband Ilias, who has always been with me in times of great pressure.

INTRODUCTION

A. The background.

"Welcome to the nineties! But you'd better watch what you say..."

The above text appeared on the cover of *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook*. (Beard & Cerf 1992). Political Correctness (or PC in short) is undoubtedly one of the signs of the nineties. This trend, which started in the United States and has spread to Europe as well, has been concerned with the fact that negative social phenomena, like sexism or racism, could be reflected in language. Political correctness aims therefore at promoting language which does not discriminate or offend anybody on grounds of sex, race, age, physical appearance, etc. It suggests avoiding some possibly offensive terms, like "Negro" or "man" to mean people in general using "Afro-American" and "human being". The term "manager" has almost become the most recent victim of political correctness, when Plymouth city council wanted to abolish it because it contained "man" and could be therefore offensive for women (*Daily Telegraph* 13.11.1993). Some of the terms promoted by PC have even found dictionary entries. The term "herstory", explained as "History (used as an alternative form to distinguish or emphasise the particular experience of women)" and "womyn", an alternative spelling of "women" "to avoid the suggestion of sexism in the sequence 'm-e-n'" have appeared not only in PC or feminist dictionaries, but even in *The New Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, from which the above explanation was taken (1991: 628 and 1532 respectively). Such examples, show however that in the attempt to neutralise language, Political Correctness has sometimes hypercorrected genuinely neutral forms. "To manage" has nothing

to do with 'man', but can be traced to either French "mener", meaning "to lead", or Latin "manus" meaning "hand". Similarly, the "his" in "history" is not a masculine possessive pronoun form; "history" originates in the homeric Greek word *histor* (= he who knows well) and has been adopted in English through the Latin *historia* "story" (see also Lakoff [1975] 1989: 46 and Cameron 1992: 111).

Terms like "man" and "he" have been objects of attacks since the last century, but have attracted particular attention since the seventies due to the revival of the feminist movement, which among others engaged itself in the debate about sexism in language (see e.g. Crystal 1987: 47; Asher & Simpson 1994: 3668). Sexism refers to sexual prejudices or, as Cameron defined it, "ideas and practices that treat either sex unfairly, or even just differently" (1992: 99). However, sexism is usually associated with discrimination against women, because most of the sexist practices have been seen as directed against women and, as far sexism in language is concerned, most feminists agree that it "works to the disadvantage of women, not men" (Cameron 1992: 100). The above mentioned terms, *man* and *he*, are supposed to be neutral terms used as generics in references to both women and men. However, their critics point out that the fact that it is the masculine terms that are used in generalisations about people can be discriminatory against women.

Most people writing on sexism in language have concentrated on English, as it is their native language and also, because the feminist movement was especially active in English-speaking countries. Moreover, as Asher & Simpson (1994: 3870–71) pointed out, because of its structure, English seems to be much more susceptible to change than other languages. Unlike German, French or Russian, English does not have grammatical gender, which governs the choice of a given pronominal anaphoric form and therefore could make

the elimination of sexist bias particularly difficult (see Baker 1992: 91). Structures like *he* or *man* are not an inherent syntactic property of the English language, but are a matter of convention and therefore, can, at least in theory, easily be changed. Most English nouns are not marked for gender, but masculine seems to prevail over feminine in many instances. "Except for words that by definition refer to females (*mare, mother*) and occupations traditionally held by females (*nurse, secretary*), English defines everything as male" write Loretto Todd and Ian Hancock in *International English Usage* (1986: 419) discussing sexist language. Thus, a classification of a given noun as masculine is not made on the basis of its syntactic properties e.g. its ending, but on the basis of its meaning, which often reflects sexual stereotypes, or, as feminists would call it "an androcentric view of society".

As has been mentioned above, *man* and its compounds, as well as *he* have traditionally served as generics to refer to all the human species, although they are also sex-specific terms meaning "male human beings". Nouns like *doctor* or *baby* are also often used in generic reference, especially that their forms do not suggest whether the referent is a man or a woman. However, while using masculine pronouns with common gender nouns might limit their interpretation, *man* can hardly be used specifically about women and with pronouns other than the masculine. As Moulton et al (1978: 1033) have noticed:

It would be a rare person who could say without irony: "She's the best man for the job."

It has been argued that using *man, he* and sex qualifiers like *male* or *female* is sexist because it promotes the androcentric view of society, where women play only a minor role or are apparently invisible. Such arguments are usually supported by works of two American anthropological linguists, Sapir and Whorf, who stated that language can determine the way we see society:

The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Sapir 1929: 209)

... every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others, in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyzes nature, notices or neglects types of relationship and phenomena, channels his reasoning and builds the house of his consciousness. (Whorf [1942] 1964: 252)

The theory of linguistic determinism, also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, has often been associated with the debate over sexism in language. The feminist linguists usually espouse the "weak" version of the hypothesis that language (here: sexist language) reflects and reinforces thinking (here: sexist world-view) (see e.g. Frank & Treichler 1989). Despite the disagreement as to whether the language is sexist because the society is sexist or vice versa, some critics of Sapir/Whorf have argued that language can be changed through the conscious effort of its speakers, while some others maintained that it is not the language which is sexist, but the usage. Moreover, as many scholars (e.g. McConnell-Ginet 1979: 64, Graddol & Swann 1989: 128-29) pointed out, nonsexist language does not guarantee a nonsexist society; languages, e.g. Chinese, Eskimo, or Turkish which have one pronoun to mean "he-or-she" are spoken in traditionally patriarchal societies.

Although it was feminists who, in their pursuit of equal rights, pointed out that language is biased against women, the issue has also attracted the attention of numerous scholars working in the field of linguistics (especially sociolinguistics), education, anthropology, psychology and sociology. The linguists have exchanged opinions for and against the use of the masculine and proposed alternative forms as generics. Some have claimed that forms like pronouns cannot be changed (Lakoff [1975] 1989) and that there is no need

to introduce new forms as *he* fulfils its role as a generic well enough. Other linguists supported by the research carried out in psychology and sociology (see Ch. 2 for details), have aimed at proving that *he* and *man* promote the male image in the minds of people.

The results of this research were the rationale behind the whole movement against sexism in language. Anti-sexist language has been increasingly encouraged by publishers (e.g. McGraw Hill 1975, Macmillan 1975), different associations (e.g. American Psychological Association – APA), universities (e.g. Cambridge and University of Strathclyde), government bodies (e.g. in Britain, New Zealand, and in the state of Florida), even the Church (to mention a report for the Church of England, entitled *Making Women Visible. The Use of Inclusive Language with the ASB* 1988). Numerous anti-sexist guidelines for writers have appeared. The most well-known are *The Handbook of Non-sexist Writing* by Miller and Swift (1981, 2nd ed. 1989); *Guidelines for Non-sexist Language in American Psychological Association Journals* (1977); *Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) Publications* (revised 1985); *On Balance. Guidelines for the Representation of Women and Men in English Language Teaching Materials* (1991). Most recently published stylebooks mention sexist language and the generic (Dummett 1993; Goodman 1991; Russell 1993; Sternberg 1993). The generic issue was brought up in the British Parliament, on the occasion of passing the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), and, more recently (1991), it attracted the attention of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, who recognised its role in promoting "real equality" between women and men. In the preface to the Recommendation No. R (90)4 "The Elimination of Sexism From Language", Catherine Lalumier, Secretary General of the Council of Europe wrote:

... it is no longer possible at the end of the twentieth century - a period marked by the emancipation of women - to tolerate a retrograde style of language which enshrines and perpetuates men's power over women. (1991: 5)

Although, as can be seen above, anti-sexist language has gained supporters even among top governmental bodies or European institutions, the influence of such institutions on language is a highly disputable matter. Hennessy (1994: 104) notices that:

the power to bring about radical language change may rest to a far lesser extent in the action of governments than in the influence of traditional linguistic authorities, including dictionaries.

Nevertheless, the campaign against sexism in language has increased people's awareness of the issue and nonsexist forms are not only mentioned in many grammars and dictionaries (see the research results of Sunderland 1994 and Hennessy 1994, also mentioned in chapter 2, section 2.1.1), but have also slowly started entering English. One does not have to look far to find examples with nonsexist pronoun forms, and as e.g. Sunderland (1994) notices, there are contexts, for instance television documentaries, where nonsexist language has started to be the norm.

Despite the abundance of literature on the subject, very few authors have devoted time to the analysis of the generic as a grammatical phenomenon on the basis of real-life examples. Too much stress has been put on the discussion of generics as a sexist issue, which overlooks the fact that the problem with generics is not only sexism, but reference. The principal concern of many authors and guidelines has been how to substitute or avoid sexist structures without discussing the factors which might be responsible for the choice of a given pronoun form. Frank & Treichler (1989: 2) point this out in the introduction to their guidelines:

while the many existing guidelines in this area provide alternatives for authors, few address the complexities and unique problems encountered in attempting to rid scholarly writing of sexist language.

One of the reasons why the guidelines cannot predict all the areas of difficulty might be that most of them have concentrated on theoretical or made-up examples. Without looking at real examples in context it is not possible to discover how the authors deal with applying non-sexist language. Nor is it likely to recognise the importance of different factors. There is very little detailed and systematic research on language currently in use. The two most recent corpora I have read about include language data collected in the media (press and television) between 1986-7 and in 1990 (Lind 1988 and Newman 1992 respectively; see section 2.1.3 for more details). There is still a need for real and more recent language data.

This study looks at generic policies of academic writers and studies the factors which might govern the choice of different pronoun forms. The corpus for the study consists of 1,428 examples with third person singular pronominals which do not specify the sex of the referents. They are collected manually from English texts in different academic domains: economics, law, linguistics, medicine and social sciences (psychology and sociology including) and organised in a database (using DBase 3+). The variables according to which the examples are analysed included: 1) pronoun form used, 2) antecedent, 3) the description of the antecedent (noun, pronoun, accompanying determiners, etc.), 4) domain, and 5) publisher.

Although the time and technical limitations have not allowed me to collect a corpus of statistical significance, I believe that it is large enough to discover trends and patterns of generic usage. I hope that the discussion of the

examples found can increase the understanding of the nature and grammatical features of the generic. In particular, in this study I aim at:

- description of generic pronoun forms currently used in academic handbooks;
- description of contexts where generic pronouns are used;
- analysing factors which might be responsible for the choice of a given pronoun as a generic (e.g. social stereotyping, stylistic devices used in the context, etc);
- description of context-mixing
- a linguistic description of the "generic" phenomenon.

B. Some definitions of the terms used in this dissertation.

Studying literature on the subject of the generic reveals that this is yet another area of grammar which is full of often ambiguous or even contradictory terms. One term, like "generic", "gender" or "hypercorrection" can be used to refer to different phenomena. At the same time, one phenomenon, like the pronoun problem studied here, is often described with many different terms. It seems therefore necessary to examine the different meanings and provide some working definitions of the terms connected with the generic and used in this dissertation.

i) Gender and sex

Generic pronouns are usually analysed as part of the grammatical phenomenon of gender in language. Gender is a very complex phenomenon and I can only attempt to give a very brief summary. Richards et al. (1985: 118) defines gender as:

(in some languages) a grammatical distinction in which words such as nouns, articles, adjectives, and pronouns are marked according to a distinction between masculine, feminine, and sometimes neuter.

Gender can also refer to the whole category: "we may say that a particular language has, say, three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, and that the language has a category of gender" (Corbett 1991: 1). This quotation also points to the fact that the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter is not necessarily found in all languages and three is not the only number of possible genders. In some languages gender can refer to the distinction between animate and inanimate, personal and impersonal.

Most linguists point to the distinction between natural gender, "where items refer to the sex of real-world entities", and grammatical gender, "which has nothing to do with sex, but which has an important role in signalling grammatical relationships between words in a sentence" (Crystal 1980: 158-9). Gender can correspond to sex (as in English personal nouns) or conflict with it (as Jespersen 1922: 846 pointed out in some cases in German).

In contrast to languages like German or French, which possess a grammatical gender, English is characterised by natural gender. Most nouns in English are not marked morphologically for gender, therefore the assignment of gender depends on their correspondence to the sex of the referents and is usually reflected in the choice of anaphoric pronouns, especially third person singular. *Mare* or *sister* refer to females and therefore are regarded as feminine, while *stallion* or *brother*, with their male reference are masculine. Nouns which do not reflect sex are generally assigned to the neuter category, although some of them, especially names of vehicles or machinery are often referred to by means of feminine pronouns (not to mention cases of personification typical especially for poetry or fairy tales). Unlike male or female nouns, like *father* or *mother*, some personal nouns, like *student* or *doctor* can refer both to men or to women. Such nouns, which can have either the masculine or the feminine pronoun in coreference, are called "dual gender" (see Quirk et al

1985). There are also nouns which Corbett (1991: 181-2) calls double- or multiple-gender categories (Quirk et al 1985 use the term "common-gender"), like "baby", which can be referred to by all masculine, feminine and neuter pronouns.

Traditionally, gender and sex, although associated with each other (see Lyons 1968), do not describe the same phenomena. Sex refers to biological differences, while gender is among others reflected in grammar (Sullivan 1983). Sex can be male or female or unspecified, while gender can be masculine, feminine and neuter. However, nowadays these terms are often used interchangeably. This is clearly visible in the terminology describing generic pronouns, where we can find side by side expressions like "sex-neutral" and "gender-neutral", "mixed-sex" and "mixed-gender", "genderless" and "bisexual". Some scholars use both sex and gender terms side by side and declare that most English pronouns do not make a distinction by sex (e.g. Jespersen 1922: 847) or analyse gender distinctions in third person singular pronouns (e.g. Quirk et al 1985: 341).

Gender is often given a new meaning, distinct from grammatical category. In the literature on sexism in language, gender is also used to describe the differences between men's and women's speech. Again gender and sex seems to be used interchangeably in this sense. Milroy (1992: 153) writes about "sex- (or gender-) differentiation in speech". Gramley & Patzold (1992: 265) mentions that 'gender' is only one of several factors that show differences between male and female speech, and then quotes another author, who describes this phenomenon as "sexual distinctions". Many authors use subtitles like "language and sex" (e.g. Cheshire 1984; Fasold 1990) and "language and gender" (e.g. Swann 1992) to describe the same phenomena: the way men and women use language and terms in language which refer to men and women.

Thus, the meaning of gender has been extended beyond strictly the grammatical category to describe anything distinct from the biological category. Malmkjaer (1991: 256), defines gender as "socially constructed categories male and female". In this meaning gender has been adopted in other disciplines. Measor & Sikes (1992: 5), for instance, writing on gender and schools, as the title of their book implies, describe the difference between sex and gender as the distinction between physiological differences between men and women and all other differences, mostly created by society. Gender has become a fashionable topic in many disciplines, especially cultural studies, social anthropology and sociology. The term "gender" can often be found in the titles or subtitles: e.g. the above mentioned *Gender and Schools* (by Measor and Sikes. 1992) or *Constraints of Desire. The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. (listed in the 1994 Routledge catalogue of Classical Studies) or *Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. (listed in the Harvard UP Classics catalogue). In the latter example, gender is used in the meaning of a biological category, which is implied not only in the main title, but also in the short summary which draws the attention to the fact that: "Aristotle's idea that there is one human gender (male, with the female representing a deformity in the design) dominated European thinking on sexuality as late as 1550 A.D." Thus again, "gender" and "sex" are mixed up to mean "the fact of being male or female", as the entry for "gender" is explained in the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (which, moreover, lists "sex" as a synonym of "gender" in this sense). One author comments on the confusion in the usage of these two terms:

For a reason obscure to me, feminists have recently promoted the use of gender as a substitute for the word sex [...] even when the distinction is purely biological: they still, however, speak of sexism and not genderism. (Dummett 1993: 106)

As discussed in this section, "gender" can have many different meanings and is prevalent as a term in different disciplines. Its widespread acceptance as a term might also be due to the fact that it is more neutral than "sex", which can have associations with "sexual intercourse" (although, as illustrated above, gender can appear even in this sense).

In this study, "gender" is used in its primary sense of the grammatical category which classifies nouns and pronouns as masculine, feminine, neuter, while "sex" is used in the discussion of the referents.

ii) Generic and specific

Both terms are commonly found in the description of a noun phrase and can be illustrated as follows:

(a) *The giraffe* has a long neck. (generic)

(b) *The giraffe* has a sore foot. (specific)

The above exemplary sentences (taken from Finegan 1994: 206), show that classifying a noun phrase as generic or specific does not depend on its syntactic properties but on what it refers to. "The giraffe" in example (a) refers to a category of giraffes, as all giraffes have long necks, whereas "the giraffe" in example (b) refers to a particular member of a category, one particular giraffe which has a problem with its foot.

Most authors (e.g. Asher & Simpson 1994; Quirk et al 1985), use the terms "generic" and "specific" as antonyms, to distinguish between a reference to a whole class of entities or one particular entity or person. Huddleston (1988), on the other hand, treats specific and non-specific meanings as antonyms, and describes the generic as a separate category: "Generic NPs are necessarily non-specific, but not all non-specific NPs, of course, are generic" (p. 91). An

example of a non-generic and non-specific noun phrase, according to Huddleston, can be *a doctor* in the following sentence: "*Kim was looking for a doctor*"; it is not any particular doctor that Kim was looking for, and at the same time the sentence does not express any generalisation about doctors.

"Generic", as a topic of this dissertation, deserves a particular attention. To give a more thorough description of this phenomenon, it is worth quoting a few more definitions and some more examples. Most linguistic encyclopaedias give similar explanations in the entry for "generic":

Describes a word or usage referring to a class of entities, e.g., *The Whale is a mammal / Whales are mammals* or state of affairs, e.g. *Birds build nests*. (Asher and Simpson 1994: 5126)

A term used in grammatical and semantic analysis for a lexical stem or proposition which refers to a class of entities, e.g. *the bat is an interesting creature, bats are horrid, the English/French..., the poor/rich/good...* (Crystal 1980: 160)

One of the most detailed grammars of English (Quirk et al 1985: 265), give the following examples of typical generic statements:

(c) *A child* learns to speak the language of the environment.

(d) *Children* learn to speak the language of the environment.

As can be seen in the examples above, nouns used in generic reference may be in the singular, as well as plural forms, and can be used for people, as well as animals and things (see also Figure 2, p. 239). Huddleston (1988) explains that generic noun phrases can be definite, when they apply to the class as a whole, or indefinite, in generalisations applying to members of the class.

Definiteness is marked by the choice of articles (definite *the* versus indefinite *a*), but as Huddleston notices, generic definite and generic indefinite noun phrases are sometimes "interchangeable" as in: "*The/A leopard* has a dark-

spotted yellowish-fawn coat." (1988: 91). Thus, apart from nouns, other parts of speech, like articles, can be used generically.

In the literature on sexism in language "generic" appears mostly in the discussions of the generic functions of *man* and *he*. Both structures are listed as generic terms, which are defined as "terms referring to the entire species - to all human kind" (Malmkjaer 1991: 259). However, many scholars (see e.g. Baron 1986; Martyna 1983; Moulton 1981 and many others) point out that *man* and the pronoun *he* is, are used first and foremost in, as they call it, "sex/gender-specific" reference, that is, to refer to males. In these cases, specific does not mean solely a reference to one individual, but rather points to the fact that this individual can be recognised as a person of a specific sex.

There are numerous examples which, taken the different meanings of both "generic" and "specific", can be difficult to analyse and describe by using only one of these terms, without specifying the exact meanings.

- (e) Man is a mammal which breastfeeds his young and experiences difficulty in giving birth. (quoted e.g. in Simpson 1993: 168).
- (f) Man is the only primate that commits rape. (quoted in Miller & Swift 1976: 43).

In both sentences, "man" (as a mammal or a primate) refers to all human species, and can be therefore treated as generic. However, the context of the sentences limits the understanding of "man" to women or men, respectively. In this sense, the sentences are sex-specific. Yet, even though the sentence refers only to one sex, it is still a generalisation about this class, so it is still generic. It should be pointed out that while sentence (f) can be generally accepted, sentence (e) may be treated as an example of hypercorrection: using *man* and *he* in generalisation about women may sound odd for some people and be completely unacceptable by others.

The above discussion indicates that both terms, "generic" and "specific", can be used with slightly different range of meanings (see Figure 1, p. 238).

Distinguishing between these meanings is important in the discussion of generic pronouns, so there is a need for indicating each meaning with an appropriate term. Because this dissertation concerns pronominal references to people, therefore I will use both terms in a narrower sense; "generic" in generalisations about people, and "specific" in references to one particular person. However, it also seems crucial to distinguish between references to the whole human species or only to one sex: either males or females. The former, where the sex of the referent(s) is not mentioned, will be called sex-indefinite, and the latter, where the sex of the referent(s) can be ascertained, will be called sex-specific.

iii) **"Indefinite generic" and "indefinite specific" pronouns.**

It is necessary at the outset to point out that not all pronouns which can be used generically are discussed under the generic label in the literature on sexism in language. Quirk et al. (1985: 354) give the following examples of pronouns which can be used generically:

We: *We* know that the earth is round.

You: *You* can always tell what she's thinking.

One: *One* can always tell what she's thinking.

They: *They* say it is going to snow today.

However, these pronouns are usually not taken into consideration by authors writing about the sexist language; for them the generic is the third person pronoun used in reference to a person, where no gender identifier exists. Although the above mentioned pronouns are used in generalisations, they are not marked for gender and thus do not create a problem of gender bias; they

are only mentioned as possible alternatives to avoid generic third-person singular pronoun references. Generic pronouns are only a part of the "generic" phenomenon. The literature on sexism is concerned only with generic pronouns which corefer with antecedents marked as [+ human] and [+ singular]; it does not take into account references to things or animals, or even about people, when the antecedent is in the plural (as in example (d) in section i above). Moreover, cases where generic reference to people is limited only to males or only to females are usually ignored. Thus, generics are pronouns used with singular personal nouns, which are not marked for gender (see Figure 2, p. 239). Grammar books which mention the problem of language bias describe generics simply as pronouns that "stand for him-or her, his-or-her" (Fowler & Fowler 1938: 75), or, pronouns referring to a person who may be female as well as male (Leech et al 1982: 178).

Generic pronouns can be used in general statements about people, when the sex of the antecedent is irrelevant (and generic pronoun can be omitted). In the following example, the client is not a particular client, but any client representing whole group of clients:

- (g) *The client* is usually the best judge of the value of [*his*] counselling. (example quoted in *The Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in APA Journals* 1977: 491)

However, there are contexts where the pronoun cannot be edited out, but at the same time there is a need to avoid reference to gender: e.g. in statements when the referent's sex is unknown. For instance, we can imagine a following remark being made in a conversation among students speculating about the new lecturer:

- (h) When *the new lecturer* comes, we will see what *he (or she)* is going to demand from us.

In the example above a reference is made to a specific person whose sex is not known, and not to any lecturer. The lecturer's name can even be known but students can still not be sure whether this Dr Brown they are talking about is a man or a woman. Some titles as well as some Christian names (like Robin, and especially diminutives: Sandy, Chris) give no sex indication at all. Although it can be argued whether such names are indefinite as to gender or only ambiguous (as is the opinion of MacKay & Fulkerson 1979), they can still be regarded as possible antecedents for pronouns whose meaning comprises "he-or-she". Moreover, as Corbett (1991) and McConnell-Ginet (1979) point out, the problem of finding a pronoun which does not indicate the referent's sex can appear even when the referent's sex is known but the speaker does not want to reveal it; Miller & Swift (1976: 145) give actual speech examples of such usage.

Cases, like the above example (h), do not seem to correspond to the definition of generic reference, which rules out the possibility of a referent being a specific person (see Richards et al. 1985: 120-21, or Huddleston 1988). However, references to specific persons are still mentioned in the discussion of sexist/nonsexist pronouns (and they can still be called "generic"). Mühlhausler & Harre (1990: 232-233) quote such use (point 2 below) among other uses of the generic masculine:

- 1) "species reference", where *he* refers back to *man* when it means "a human being of either sex";
- 2) "indeterminate reference", where the sex of the referent is unknown e.g. "If *anyone* has mislaid ... car keys will ... come to the Pursuer's office?";
- 3) "exemplification", where the referent is an exemplar of a given type, e.g. "When *Baby* cuts ... first teeth ... may run a slight fever."

MacKay (1980a), comparing the uses of the generic *he* and generic *they*, follows essentially the distinction drawn by Bodine ([1975] 1990: 168, 183 Note 2)¹ who describes four uses of pronouns referring to, as she called it, sex-indefinite referents (three of which might be specific persons), which she illustrates with the generic "they":

1. mixed-sex, distributive, e.g. *Anyone* can do it if *they* try hard enough.
2. mixed-sex, disjunctive, e.g. *Either Mary or John* should bring a schedule with *them*.
3. sex-unknown, e.g. *Who* dropped *their* ticket?
4. sex-concealed.²

Neither MacKay (1980a) nor Bodine ([1975] 1990) explain the above terms any further, but looking at the examples they give it is possible to make a brief summary of these uses. Mixed-sex, distributive usage means a generalisation about a hypothetical referent; the latter two uses (sex-indefinite and sex-concealed) can be observed in references about a specific real person, whose sex is not known or not revealed by the speaker; and, finally, mixed-sex, disjunctive refers to the cases where the antecedent is a disjunctive phrase with a male and a female distincts (both hypothetical and real referents).

Also Corbett (1991: 218) discusses some cases where the sex of the referent cannot be ascertained and two of the variants he mentions illustrate generic as well as specific pronoun references:

- a) when the referent is non-specific: "If a *patient* wishes to change doctors, *he/she/he or she* should advise the receptionist.

¹ MacKay adds to Bodine's distinction non human reference, corporate reference in the case of *they* and Deity function of *he*, 1980a: 351), but these uses are irrelevant to my research.

² This use is not listed in the original article (Bodine [1975] 1990), but is mentioned briefly, without any further explanation or illustrative sentence in the reprint, which appears in Cameron (1990: 183, Note 2).

- b) when we do not know the sex of the referent: "In that case I'd like to speak to the *manager* and we'll see what *he/she/he or she* says."; also when we do not want to mention the person's sex;

Corbett's variant, described here in point a), corresponds roughly to Bodine's "mixed-sex, distributive" and to "exemplary" reference of Mühlhäusler and Harre, and is a classic generic reference. Variant b) is what Mühlhäusler and Harre call "indeterminate reference" and Bodine lists as two separate categories, sex-indefinite and sex-concealed, and can be defined as a specific reference. Thus, the authors identify practically the same uses of the same phenomenon, only called differently by them: "generic" or "sex-indefinite" pronouns. The confusion in terminology is even more evident in the fact that some other authors (e.g. Sunderland 1994) use "generic" and "indefinite" as separate categories, possibly to indicate that the antecedents can be generic nouns or indefinite pronouns.

In parallel to the term "generic", various other names are used, e.g. "bisexual", "mixed-sex", "dual", "common gender", "degendered", "genderless", "sex-indefinite", "epicene", "sex-inclusive", "sex-neutral". All these terms appear in the literature to refer to the pronoun which is supposed to mean "he-or-she", although some of them may be used or are used to describe only one aspect of this pronoun usage; e.g. "bisexual" may designate a referent who can be either of the two sexes; "sex-indefinite" might suggest a reference to an indefinite person of unspecified sex; and "sex-inclusive" simply points to the fact that the pronoun should not suggest any sex at all. None of the terms currently in use seem satisfactory and the authors simply choose one of them or even use several of these terms at the same time. Some authors admit the inadequacy of the names; Newman (1992), for instance, thinks that the term "generic" is misleading or ambiguous and therefore he himself uses the term "epicene"

(common-gender), although he realises that even this term does not cover the two meanings he discusses, namely common-gender and uncertain gender.

Although, as has been indicated by Newman (1992) and summarised in the above discussion, the term "generic" can be very misleading, it is so common in the literature on the topic that it has become almost a key word or trademark of this particular grammatical problem. Moreover, none of the alternative terms used seems to be adequate. Thus, I have decided to continue using this term although occasionally, especially in the overview of literature, I will resort to the expression used by the researcher under discussion (to avoid possible misinterpretation). However, because I am interested in all the possible uses of the third person pronouns which do not specify sex, I need to distinguish between pronoun references to hypothetical and real individuals whose sex cannot be determined. In the discussion of my corpus I am going to adopt the term "indefinite generic", and the term "indefinite specific", respectively, where "indefinite" stands for "sex-indefinite". I also need to distinguish between the pronoun used in reference to a referent who can be only a man or only a woman, and reference to a referent who can be either. For this purpose I will use the terms "gender-specific" and "gender-neutral", respectively. I will also use the term "nonsexist" to refer to pronouns which were suggested as alternatives for the masculine generic *he*, which is usually regarded as sexist. For the sake of convenience I also make use of the term "single-gender pronoun" in contrast to "dual-gender pronoun" to distinguish the masculine or the feminine pronouns from the disjunctive *he or she*, *he/she* or *s/he*.

iv) Generalisation, exemplification and instantiation

A generalisation is a reference to a typical representative of a class, who is usually an abstract entity. This is then a classic example of generic reference.

However, a generic statement may also refer to a hypothetical referent but shown in a particular situation, as in the following example:

- (i) Imagine you have to go back to hospital for a check-up after an operation and are anxious to know whether your recovery is on-course. *The surgeon* is in a terrible rush. Breathlessly you ask: "I seem to be progressing rather slowly, do you think the recovery rate is likely to speed up later?" By the time you'd finished saying this the surgeon would have been way out of the room. So you sub it down: "Does recovery usually start slow and end fast, or the other way round, would you say?" Still too wordy. Try again: "Will I be getting better any quicker from now on?" That, with any luck, will stop *him* on *his* tracks. (an example from the present corpus: Bagnall 1993: 51)

The surgeon in example (i) is not any specific person. However, the context of this example is so vivid that a reader may imagine the whole situation and the surgeon in it as one person with a particular sex, and not a generic, sexless referent. As was observed by Frank & Treichler (1989: 147), on the basis of a similar example, "the concreteness of [the] image (however "unlikely" the event) complicates our ability to make a generic or gender-neutral interpretation". To refer to such cases I use the term "exemplification", which has been the term used by Mühlhausler & Harre (1990), but in a slightly different sense (see point iii above). This seems to be a convenient term because of the fact that many exemplifications start with an introductory "for example".

Instantiation can be seen as a special case of exemplification. The term was first suggested by Newman (1992: 466), who discusses "instantiation of notionally and syntactically plural referents" and gives a following example:

- (j) *A lot of hypochondriacs* that must have doctors going, "Oh, *him*, on the phone again".

Like exemplification, the statement above describes an imaginary case, but the reader can imagine the situation when a doctor expresses a complaint about one of his hypochondriac patients and can even imagine one person as the hypochondriac.

The difference between instantiasation and exemplification lies in the syntactic and notional number of the antecedent. Instantiasation occurs when the singular pronoun refers to a grammatically and notionally plural antecedent, while in exemplification both the pronoun and the antecedent are in the singular. To paraphrase Newman's example, an exemplification case might look like:

- (k) Imagine *a hypochondriac* who comes to *his* doctor every day and complains of looking pale.

This stands in contrast to what might have been a typical generic statement:
e.g.:

- (l) *A hypochondriac patient* might be a nuisance for *his* doctor.

v) **Hypercorrection**

The preoccupation with grammatical correctness often results in hypercorrection. Hypercorrection, as defined by Richards et al. (1985: 134), is "overgeneralisation of a rule in language use". In the case of generic pronouns, overgeneralisation can work in two ways depending on what is chosen as the rule. If the prescriptive "he" is chosen as a rule, then any example of a generic sentence where the use of *he* seems anomalous can be treated as hypercorrection. Jochnowitz (1980) quotes the following example, which she found in 1940 edition of *Gone with the Wind*.

- (m) *Everyone* was very polite and kind to her, because *he* felt sorry for her.

He sounds awkward in this sentence because its singular form disagrees with the notional plurality of *everyone*. Jochnowitz assumes that this form was probably the result of correction by some editor because an earlier edition of *Gone with the Wind* (from 1936) had *they*. *

At present, with the concern for sex-neutral language, the use of sex-neutral forms may be regarded as a rule, and some authors list as hypercorrection examples with gender-neutral forms, which are unnecessary or wrong. Metcalf (1984: 283), for instance, quotes examples where sex-neutral form *he* or *she* is used in reference to plural antecedents:

- (n) *Those who have been paid for the oil on his or her property, will confirm that the difference in income from oil at \$29 a barrel and routine crop sales is night and day.*

Some authors have also observed instances where gender-neutral forms clearly refer to one sex and wondered whether such gender-specific usage can also be treated as an example of hypercorrection. Abbott (1984: 48), for instance, found *they* being used in reference to *man*:

- (o) *If a woman approaches a man they immediately assume she fancies them.*

The term "hypercorrection" is used in this work to mean any instance of generic reference, where the pronoun form used seems inappropriate; be it the masculine used in reference to notionally plural antecedents, or gender-neutral form used in reference to syntactically plural antecedents.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM WITH THE GENERIC MASCULINE AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1.1 The background to the problem.

"Unless we teach *a child* to read...
we hobble that child for the rest of *his* life."

John Major, Prime Minister - Conservative Party Conference,
Friday, 8th October, 1993.

The example above was taken from an advertisement in *The Daily Telegraph* (15.11.1993). John Major's statement refers to a child, a representative of children in general, not to any particular individual with a clearly defined sex. People in general may be either males or females, yet English has no way of indicating this in a pronominal reference. As Quirk et al (1985: 342) put it: "Difficulties of usage arise because English has no sex-neutral 3rd person singular pronoun."

The existing 3rd person pronouns, *he* and *she*, are marked for gender and therefore cannot fulfil the sex-neutral role. The pronoun reference John Major uses is *he*, which is the policy recommended by many prescriptivists, especially those of the old school (e.g. Pink 1928; Fowler 1968). The rule 'when in doubt use the masculine', is actually a phenomenon known in other languages as well, e.g. Russian or Greek. In fact, as some linguists have observed (Mühlhäusler & Harre 1990; Corbett 1991; Key 1975), few languages have a pronoun form which

means "he or she" (languages of American Indians, Nilotic languages). Languages which do not have special forms for this purpose, have to resort to the use of existing forms by convention, or as an evasive technique (Corbett 1991), which in the case of English is the masculine pronoun, or the plural form *they*, respectively.

The problem with using the masculine by convention, is that English syntax is said to be predominantly based on natural gender; that is, anaphoric pronouns are selected according to the sex of the referent. Thus, if the referent is a female person or animal, the reference is achieved through feminine pronoun forms, and in the case of male referents, masculine pronoun forms are used. This is a clear and easy rule when the referent's sex is known. However, the masculine pronoun *he* is used not only in reference to male referents, but also in cases when the sex of the referent was unknown, mixed or indefinite. This explains why some feminists claimed that "English possesses natural gender only if one is male" (Spender 1980: 160). Some linguists (Sunderland 1994) maintained that the generic use of the masculine is not a feature of natural but grammatical gender, while others, like Wolfe (1989), called it "cultural gender". This double usage of the masculine accounts also for some of the names used by scholars writing about the prescriptive *he*: "a parasitic reference" (Moulton et al 1978), "sexist pronoun" (Shear 1981), "androcentric generic" (Bodine 1975; Cooper 1984), "pseudo-generic" (Miller 1983; Olin Hill 1986; Malmkjaer 1991) or "false generic" (Miller & Swift 1989; Cheshire 1984; Porreca 1984).

The use of generic masculine *he* is according to some, a proof that language was "man-made" and male-centred or "androcentric" (Spender 1980; Stanley 1978; Morgan 1972). Feminists became interested in the history of the generic and the findings often led them to claim that "generic masculine" is just "men's conspiracy". Stanley (1978) and Bodine (1975) found that the prescription of the masculine as the generic started only at the beginning of the 19th century. According to Stanley, the earliest prescription to use generic *he* as a reference to anyone was in Murray's Grammar of 1795, while Bodine traces it back to Kirkby's Rule 21 from 1746. Murray's Rule V (found also in the later editions of his grammar, like the 3rd edition of 1816, which I have consulted) states that there must be agreement in number and gender between pronouns and their antecedents. The use of the masculine pronoun as a correct form with antecedents such as *anyone* is only covertly prescribed, where Murray regards the use of *they* in such contexts as a violation of his rule. (1816: 232-33)

Stanley (1978) has emphasised that the prescription was advocated by men and for men, as only men had access to the 'media' of those days, both as writers and readers. In her opinion, this rule, as well as the grammarians' treatment of masculine gender as "more worthy" or "more noble", reflected men's view of the world. Sklar (1983), who comments on Stanley's views, generally agrees that men were a dominant power in those times, but she indicates that some male grammarians actually wrote handbooks for women and some women were authors of grammar books as well (see p.352). For Sklar, it is not surprising that the rule, being men's invention, revealed "the prejudices of their age" (p. 351). It is also worth pointing out, as I have discovered, that not all male grammarians of

the 19th century advocated the masculine as a generic rule. Taylor's English Grammar of 1804, for instance, mentions the use of one to refer to people in general, "to represent a general, undetermined collective third person" (p. 26).

Sklar (1983) thinks that the grammarian's preoccupation with Latin rather than androcentrism, might have been the main reason for formulating such rules. The grammarians regarded Latin as a model language and tried to incorporate some of its rules, like concord, into their English grammars. The influence of Latin on prescriptivists has been pointed out by other scholars, like Bodine (1975) or Newman (1992). Newman (1992) also underlines the prescriptivists' concern for standardisation in the language and suggests that in the case of pronouns it might have been due to the lack of a consistent system in pronominal forms. As an example Newman (p. 449) lists the variations existing in different manuscripts, for instance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales:

They/He/Ø will come up and offre in Goddess name. ("Prologue to the Pardoner's Tale", lines 385-7)

It is noteworthy that due to phonological changes some Middle English dialects had one form, *ha* or *he*, for third person singular and plural (see Mosse 1952: 55 or Samuels 1972: 85). It is difficult to interpret this fact to mean that at one point in its history, English had a gender-neutral form. Especially that the users must have felt the need to distinguish between masculine and feminine, singular and plural in the third person, given that a Scandinavian-derived form of the plural pronoun, and Scandinavian-influenced form of the feminine singular pronoun entered the language.

Distinguishing between genders might not only have been necessary to resolve potential ambiguities. It might have also been the result of the gradual change in English from grammatical to natural gender. Most scholars (e.g. Bourcier 1981) indicate that already in Old English, the pronoun choices often reflected natural rather than grammatical gender: *maegden* "girl" was neuter, *wifmann* "woman" was masculine, but both were usually used with feminine pronouns. Pronominal reference does not seem therefore, to have been the most important indicator of gender in Old English. Gender was reflected first of all in morphological endings of accompanying adjectives, or forms of accompanying determiners and verbs. However, as most morphological endings disappeared in the course of Middle English, grammatical gender was finally taken over by natural gender, which made the pronouns the main vehicles of gender. To refer to the sexes, English could not do with *e* form, but needed to possess genders of the 3rd person singular pronoun.

The problems over third person pronouns in Middle English and today might be seen as opposites; finding the form to distinguish between the sexes in Middle English, and a form which does not make a sex reference in Present Day English. Still, the reasons for the pronoun changes might be explained in a similar way - by the need for precise, unambiguous forms which can be used in different situations. Avoiding ambiguities and lack of gender forms to reflect the sexes of humans and animals might have been the reason for distinguishing between genders in third person singular pronoun in Middle English. In Present Day English there is a lack of a form to be used in general reference to any person regardless of sex and both forms traditionally used in this sense, *he* and *they*, are

potentially ambiguous, because of their double meaning. However, today's concern to find an appropriate and nonsexist pronoun form can also be due to the pressure of the society, a factor which is not taken into account in tracing the changes in third person pronoun in Middle English. As Newman (1992: 447) pointed out "At present, [...], sociological preoccupations, such as relations between the sexes have begun to predominate".

1.2 Why is the masculine *he* criticised as a generic?

As shown by research into the history of the generic, *he* has been introduced as a generic form early in the nineteenth century, as a substitute for the form *they*, which had often been used in the generic sense so far. Prescriptive grammarians, preoccupied with the notion of logic, clarity and elegance criticised generic *they* for violating the agreement in number. According to them, the masculine, being singular (and regarded as a more worthy gender), was the only correct form.

Violation of number concord is listed among solecisms, one of the "three deadly sins" against the standard, defined as "phenomena which are somehow considered to have to do with logic" (Gramley & Patzold 1992: 5). However, Gramley & Patzold point to the difficulty in applying logic:

A singular pronoun such as everyone is said logically to demand continued reference in the singular [...]. But there is as much logic in recognizing the 'logical plurality' of everyone "all people".

The other two arguments for using the masculine generic, elegance and clarity can also be a controversial matter. Elegance involves a very subjective judgement of each user of English and 'de gustibus non est disputandum',

especially in linguistic descriptions, where such arguments should not be used at all. Clarity can also be disputed, taking into account that the primary meaning of *he* is "male".

Moreover, it is often pointed out that breaking grammatical concord is a very frequent phenomenon (Bodine 1975, Visser 1963, McKnight 1928). In the case of the generic, whatever functions in this form presents a problem in agreement: *they* fails to agree in number, while the masculine pronoun does not agree in gender (see e.g. Bodine 1975). Feminists and prescriptivists disagree as to which concord is more important: prescriptivists often stated that "the masculine embraces the feminine", while feminists claimed that plural includes the singular. However, feminists point to the fact that both violations are not socially equivalent: "number lacks social significance" as Bodine (1975: 133) expressed it.

Among criticisms of the masculine used as the generic, scholars discuss the inappropriateness of this form in some social contexts. It is pointed out that *he* is a sexist form and can be offensive or discriminatory, or that it reflects or intensifies social or occupational stereotyping. At the same time, many writers indicate that the form may lead to ambiguities, or be grammatically incorrect. Some of these arguments are analysed in greater detail below.

- **"He is a sexist form and can be offensive"**

Generic masculine is said to reflect and promote male dominance in society.

Some female English speakers feel that the generic masculine excludes them and

can even lead to discrimination. Martyna (1983), Miller & Swift (1989) and Frank & Treichler (1989) mention cases where the ambiguity of *he* in some instances of Canadian and American law actually led to discrimination against women. *He* and *man* have been understood as generics only in the clauses concerning penalties or burdens, but not in the clauses about privileges (see Frank & Treichler 1989: 4). Psychological experiments showed that the masculine terms are not understood generically. Bem & Bem's (1973) research demonstrated that women are less likely to answer the job advertisements which employ masculine terms. However, even males may find it awkward in some situations. Green (1977: 152) gives an example where a heterosexual male might feel confused or offended if confronted with the following use of a masculine generic:

Dating can be fun if you know *a person* well before you go out with *him*.

Some new language purists state that avoiding masculine generics is a problem of language etiquette in the same way as the word *Negro* has been.

Shear (1981: 19) expresses it even more strongly:

Statistically speaking, the unknown, indefinite, or archetypal person (the third-person singular) in the United States is likely to be a white Protestant. Yet we instantly see the folly of inserting "WP" into each sentence.

• Occupational stereotyping

He is not used consistently to mean *he or she*. What is often observed in the use of generics is occupational stereotyping, that is use of gender-based pronominal

to designate gender-stereotyped occupational categories. Such occupations as manager, truck driver and dentist, judge, politician, engineer, legislator, police officer, farmer, plumber, boss are often associated with men and therefore used with the pronoun *he*. The pronoun *she*, on the other hand is often found in reference to such occupations as nurse, librarian and secretary, baby sitter, shopper, or social worker (list of sex-related occupations is based on Cochran-Papatzikou 1988). Moreover, the use of pronouns can also reflect the traditional roles of men and women. Men might be portrayed at home, reading newspapers and discussing politics, or in garages repairing something, while women can usually be seen in the kitchen cooking, or discussing problems with children or gossiping. Even alternating pronouns might reflect stereotyping as I have discovered in my previous study (Ozieblowska 1991: 58), where one of the leaflets on child safety uses the masculine to discuss a child who is growing up and becomes more inquisitive, and the feminine form to discuss a child "exploring [the] kitchen":

Later on, as *your child* continues to grow, *he* will become even more inquisitive.

Your child may be particularly fascinated with what you are doing if *she* cannot see you properly, so it's a good idea to try to position *her* where you can keep an eye on each other.

It is difficult to assess to what extent such sex-role or occupational stereotyping may reflect reality. Real-life statistics shows that women are under-represented in public life, medicine, accountancy, banking and the law.¹

¹ See Ellis, E. (1988). *Sex Discrimination Law*. Aldershot: Gower. pp. 1-2.

The masculine used about a representative of any of these professions might therefore be called "a majority generic" and may be an instance of what Wolfe (1989) calls "cultural gender". However, the problem arises when the speaker relies on stereotyping or real-life statistics when choosing a pronoun to refer to a specific but unidentified person. In such cases, the use of the masculine might reveal the speaker's assumption that the referent is male, which if wrong, may become a source of embarrassment for the speaker. McConnell-Ginet (1979: 71) points this out in the following example, where the speaker assumes that a child practising judo is a boy:

A: I've got to drive one of the kids to judo practice.

B: How long has he been taking judo?

A: *He's a she*, it's my daughter.

B: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know girls, I mean I didn't think ... oh, you know.

Another problem is that reality changes. While once the reference to a priest was undoubtedly a 'he', with the ordination of women as priests in the Church of England, a priest can also be a 'she'.

- **Ambiguity of the referent.**

Many scholars (e.g. Corbett 1991, MacKay 1983) have pointed to the lack of neutrality as a drawback of the pronoun *he*. It cannot work in a neutral way because it is marked positively as a masculine form, and this masculine meaning "carries over into the less common generic usage", as Corbett expresses it (1991:

221). Examination of the written sources has indicated that there are more male characters or references to men than to women, thus adding strength to the argument that men are more visible than women. The greater "visibility" of men is also underlined by the frequency of occurrence of the masculine pronoun. The pronoun *he* was found to appear several times more frequently than *she* (Graham 1975 and Brown corpus quoted by Corbett 1991). MacKay (1983) has found a similar pattern, on which he has commented that *he* has all the features of an effective propaganda item. Even more recent corpora, e.g. the COBUILD corpus indicate that the masculine has still twice as many occurrences than the feminine, and is the twelfth most frequent word (Sunderland 1994: 19). At the same time the masculine is usually occurring in its sex-specific sense: according to Snizek & Jazwinski (1986) generic *he* is encountered much less frequently than sex-specific *he*. Wilson & Ng (1988) suggest also that children may acquire the sex-specific meaning of the masculine prior to the generic meaning. All this accounts for the fact that *he* is mostly interpreted as referring to males.

Moreover, the context may not always be sufficient to distinguish whether a generic or a masculine reference is intended. There are numerous examples when the author may even think in generic terms at first, but then, suddenly the reference seems to be limited to males only. Classical examples of this kind are sentences with generic *man*, like the following (quoted e.g. in Miller & Swift 1989: 15-16):

Man can do several things which the animal cannot do [. . .]
Eventually, *his* vital interests are not only life, food, access to females etc., but also values, symbols, institutions . . .

The first part of the sentence suggests a generic statement about human being as opposed to animal. This generic interpretation turns out to be limited to men only, when the author mentions "access to females" as one of "man's vital interests".

It should also be pointed out that the intention of the author/speaker may often be misunderstood by the reader/listener. Even if the author uses the masculine in a generic sense, there is no guarantee that the reader will interpret it as a generic (Snizek & Jazwinski 1986: 642, see also section 2.1.2).

The lack of clarity in the use of the masculine generic is also pointed out by the Council of Europe Recommendation;

[sexist language] affects the understanding of language since, when the independence of women is recognised, the traditional use in most languages of the masculine gender as a generic term to denote the human species or men and women at the same time is no longer understood as including women. (1991: 10-11)

- **He cannot be used as a generic in all contexts**

Several linguists have reported the inadequacy of *he* in some grammatical contexts. Most often the problem discussed was concerned with lack of agreement. The masculine may, for instance, look awkward in references to some indefinite pronouns, whose meaning often implies plural. Bodine (1975: 140) quotes a following example, where the masculine does not agree with the notional number of *everybody*.

When I came up, *everybody* was laughing at me, but I was glad to see *him* all the same.

In some cases the use of *he* may result in semantic anomaly. McConnell-Ginet (1979: 75), for instance lists disjunctive phrases with a specifically female disjunct:

If *either parent* in a marriage wants a divorce, **he* should consult a good lawyer.

The masculine used with *a parent* might indicate that the reference is actually made to a father, as mother is unlikely to be referred to as *he*.

By the same token, masculine generic possessive is also unlikely to be used with phrases like: **his husband* or the even more neutral *his spouse*. A spouse can be husband or wife, and the use of any single-gender pronoun forms with the spouse limits the disjunctive interpretation to either of these two. Neither the masculine, nor the feminine alone are sex-indefinite here: the use of "his spouse" in reference to a husband sounds as awkward as the use of "her spouse" in reference to a wife (unless the examples go beyond heterosexual couples, but then, so far the word "partner", and not "spouse" is usually used).

It is also questionable whether the masculine can be used with referents who belong to the female group. Some scholars argue that examples like the following, when the masculine is used with antecedents of exclusive meaning are "patently absurd" or "biologically absurd":

... at least twenty four hours before any abortion is performed in the state, *the person who is to have such abortion* shall receive counselling ... concerning *his* decision to have such abortion.
(Miller & Swift 1976: 145)

Everyone should decide for *himself* whether or not to have an abortion. (Shear 1981: 19)

The above examples can only refer to females in this context, therefore *he* is not sex-inclusive in the sense that it can refer to both sexes. At the same time, *he* is not used in reference to males, and cannot therefore be interpreted as sex-specific. Thus the masculine must have been intended as a neutral form. Bendix (1979: 29, footnote 6), who compares the uses of the masculine addressed to a mixed and to an all female audience, is of the opinion that the latter creates much less problems in determining whether females are fully included in the use of *he* "since there are no males present to which *he* could preferentially refer." Bendix stresses the fact that the interpretation of *he* may depend on the social background, and that women educated according to the old standards of prescriptive grammar are likely to apply or expect the masculine in any context: mixed-sex or one-sex groups.

1.3 Solutions to the generic problem

There have been numerous suggestions as to what should be done to avoid using the masculine generic. Those most often found in anti sexist stylistic guidelines include the following techniques:

1. pluralization
2. rephrasing
3. using other pronoun forms
 - a) writing in first person
 - b) addressing the reader directly as *you*
 - c) *one*
 - d) *it*
 - e) *she*
 - f) singular *they*

- g) a dual-gender pronoun *he/she, she or he, s/he*
 - h) alternating between *he* and *she*
 - i) a new generic pronoun
4. explaining in the preface which pronoun policy is going to be adopted or adding a note that the chosen pronoun form is supposed to be understood generically.

The first two techniques, as well as points 3a) and 3b) generally aim at avoiding making a reference in the singular. These seem to be the most often recommended techniques, found in many grammar books and stylebooks (e.g. Leech et al 1982; Dummett 1993), and in almost all guidelines (e.g. "Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in APA Journals" 1977; Miller & Swift 1989; first published in 1980). These techniques are also favoured by editors, like Nilsen (1984) who writing about her experience as a co-editor of *English Journal* mentions that:

Academic writing does not always have to be in third person. Depending on the subject, the tone and readability may be improved by writing in first or second person. (1984: 154)

Changing from a singular to a plural surface structure solves the problem by enabling writers to use non-gender marked plural pronouns... (1984: 155)

Interestingly, Nilsen herself uses the *he or she* form in reference to *someone* in her article (1984: 153).

Nilsen's experience as an editor shows that not all authors want to conform to editors' recommendations. Some may strongly insist that their pronoun usage is not changed. One such author, who is mentioned anonymously by Nilsen, actually comments on Nilsen's article and on some of the proposed methods to avoid third person singular:

An automatic conversion to 'they' leads one away from the real and the personal - and sixty three steps closer to bureaucracy. And anyone who tries to write an article in second person probably won't ever write another one. (Ohanian 1985: 545)

Pluralizing, or rephrasing (passivization, using definite articles instead of personal possessives, etc.) may of course be useful in some cases, but they do not seem to be applicable in all. Nilsen (1984: 157) herself notices that sometimes pluralizing may alter the meaning intended by the author. There are cases where the author may not wish to refer to a representative of all species, but to one individual and then the only solution is to use one of the single-gender pronouns. She adds that:

Individuals are either male or female and as such can most appropriately and efficiently be referred to with either masculine or feminine pronouns. (1984: 157)

One of the guides, "Making women visible", indicates that the difficulty with recasting sentences into the plural is that "it can take away the force implicit in singular address" (1988: 17). Moreover, as the authors of the guide discovered, while trying to insert sex-inclusive language in *The Alternative Service Book*, sometimes no change seemed possible. The authors of another guide, Frank & Treichler (1989: 174), point out that pluralizing may lead to hypercorrection, or can change the original meaning. As an example they compare the two following sentences:

He is expanding his operation

They are expanding their operation.

Also substituting the definite article for the possessive his, which is one of the techniques of avoiding gender bias, may not always be applied. In the following

example from "Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in APA Journals" (1977: 490), the proposed substitute for the masculine pronoun is not the definite article, but the dual-gender pronoun *his or her*.

Each child was to place a car on *his* board so that two cars and boards looked alike. (p. 490)

"Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in APA Journals" do not explain the reasons for such substitution (instead they warn to use *he or she* "sparingly", because it can be monotonous), but I can venture a suggestion that the use of the possessive pronoun is much more precise than the use of the article. "The board" might mean "any board" or perhaps just one board in the classroom, while the use of possessive indicates that each child has a board and is supposed to use it. Thus, recasting the sentence may result in a change of meaning, but also in losing precision of expression.

In my opinion it is not always possible to avoid the third person pronoun. We may, of course, use you when writing a series of instructions, but even then we may feel the need to refer to a referent outside the immediate context. *A Study Guide for Overseas Students*, one of the University of Glasgow's study guides, for instance, in the section on how to give a talk, uses an imperative, but at one point has to resort to a generic:

Look at *each person* in the group from time to time. If you look interested in *them*, *they* are more likely to feel interested in what you say. (Primrose, undated p. 25)

I also believe that third person pronouns may be difficult to avoid in legal provisions, which often refer precisely to one generic person. The use of *you* in

penal code, for instance, might make the reader feel identified with the culprit to a certain degree. *You*, as indicated among others by Quirk (1985: 354), can suggest a reference to the hearer's or the speaker's life or experience.

As rephrasing or recasting into the plural cannot work in all contexts, there is still a need for a third person gender-neutral pronoun. The pronoun *one* is often defined as "generic" (Quirk 1985), and it has been observed in such use even in some old grammar books (like Taylor 1804, mentioned in section 1.1). *One*, at some time has also been advocated in schools to be used instead of *you* (see Palmer 1984: 84). Pronoun *one* does not create problems in reference, as it has its own forms, like *one's* or *oneself*, which are devoid of connotations with sex. However, *one* does not attract the attention of the linguists discussing the generic or guidelines for nonsexist usage. Some anti-sexist guidelines ("Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in APA Journals" 1977; or "On Balance. Guidelines for the Representation of Women and Men in English Language Teaching Materials" 1991) do not even list it as a way of avoiding the sexual bias in language. Some others, like *The Handbook of Non-sexist Writing for Writers, Editors and Speakers* by Miller & Swift (1989: 57) mention the use of *you* as well as *one* but warn that "In Britain, however, the use of 'one' tends to carry with it certain specific class implications, whereas 'you' does not." According to "Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications" (1987), *one* changes the tone of what somebody says or writes. Also Weidmann (1984) suspects that the apparent unpopularity of this form may be due to the fact that *one* in subject, object, and other forms is found only in current British English. In American English *one* is often found to be used with masculine generics, so it does not

eliminate the generic problem. Moreover, most grammar books (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 388) stress that in both American and British English this form is found only in formal use. Limitations in register might be therefore one of the obstacles in adopting *one* as a sex-neutral technique. It should also be underlined that there are some limitations in using this form in general statements. *One*, similarly to *you*, usually includes the speaker, and therefore, can only be used in generalisations which are true about the speaker (see e.g. Quirk et al 1985: 387; Swan 1980: 440). Being a student, I can say, e.g. "When one is a student, one must work hard to pass the exams", but I cannot use *one* talking about doctors; in other words, when one is a student one cannot say "When one is a doctor..."

The pronoun *it*, although called "neuter", is usually discarded as a sex-neutral form because it violates the human requirement (Weidmann 1984). It is mostly used in reference to animals and things, and the only nouns that denote humans and which can sound acceptable are those referring to children (*child*, *baby*, *toddler*, etc.). However, many writers use masculine or feminine pronouns in reference to a child. Dr Spock's famous book on child care is a good example: when he was accused of using "sexist" masculine forms, he did not resort to using it, but preferred to alternate masculine and feminine pronouns (see Cheshire 1984).

It is worth noticing though, that in Old English the possessive of this pronoun was identical with the possessive of the masculine. In Old English, with grammatical gender, neuter did not mean a reference to inanimate objects or

animals, as is its meaning today. Moreover, as Gleason (1965: 385) observes, the neuter pronoun actually functioned in a generic sense "where the sex was absent, unknown, or irrelevant" in Early Modern English. Key (1975: 92) quotes an entry from Johnson's dictionary where *it* is used in coreference to *person*. With the transition from grammatical to natural gender, the neuter pronoun has however started to be associated with impersonal, generic or specific reference. There are only a few expressions when *it* can refer to a human referent; e.g. "Who is it?", "It's me." mentioned by Key (1975: 92).

The pronoun *she* is recommended as a sex-neutral technique only in "Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in APA Journals" (1977) and is used mostly by women, possibly as a counterbalance to the masculine generics (Bolinger 1980). *She* used as a generic is called by feminists "consciousness-raising technique", "visibility strategy" or "positive language" (Cameron 1992: 125). Some users argue that *she* makes women more visible and that it can make men realise how women feel when they are referred to with a masculine form (Cameron 1992: vii, Cheshire 1984; Miller & Swift 1976). There were even claims that *she* refers to both sexes because it contains *he* (as quoted by Hook 1974). However, most scholars reject the feminine generic on the same grounds as the masculine generic, pointing to the fact that "neither is grammatically neutral" (Sullivan 1983: 272), and that *she* is actually more marked for sex than *he* (McConnell-Ginet 1979). Greenbaum (1988: 18) summed up the use of the feminine form as "reverse discrimination". Although, some scholars defend this use, saying that "Nonsexist language did not and does not have to mean gender-neutral language" (Sunderland 1994: 18), ordinary users of English are reported to prefer the masculine; Cheshire (1984:

36) mentions a book on childcare whose author, being under the pressure from the readers, changed generic policy from *she* to *he*.

They is a gender-neutral pronoun most often recommended by authors discussing gender bias. It says nothing about the gender (sex) of the referent and, some scholars (e.g. Weidmann 1984) even argue that this form says nothing about the actual number of referents; does not even specify whether a real referent exists at all. Its only drawback is that it is also used with plural antecedents and can be potentially ambiguous. In the case of reflexives some authors have found a way to distinguish between singular and plural by using a singular form "themselves" (Lind 1988 quotes such examples). However, no form has been suggested for possessives or object forms.

Some scholars (see Bodine 1975; Shear 1981; Weidmann 1984) make the analogy to the second person pronoun *you*, which is used both as a singular and plural form, and claim that *they* can also be used in both singular and plural senses.

Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that these two pronoun forms cannot be compared. The fact that *you* does not usually lead to ambiguities might be explained by the fact that this form refers to the addressee/s, while *they* does not refer to the immediate context, and the addressee/s may not know who and how many people are actually referred to. There may also be cases where it can be difficult to distinguish which is the referent as *they* may be used as a sex-neutral device, or in reference to a plural noun phrase which may appear in the context, as in the following example quoted by Dummett (1993:107):

When a reporter questions the rebels, their credentials are not enquired after.

The possessive form *their* can be used here as a sex-neutral reference to *reporter*, but it can also corefer with *rebels*. However, the masculine *he* might be even more ambiguous than *they* in a similar context: i.e. in a sentence where two singular noun phrases appear side by side. If, for instance, the above sentence was rewritten as:

When a reporter questions the rebel, his credentials are not enquired after.

both *a reporter* and *the rebel*, might be possible antecedents for the masculine *his*.

Some authors feel that there is a need for both singular and plural common-gender nouns. Green (1977), for instance, points out that if *they* substituted the masculine in all cases, it would be impossible to express the difference in meaning between the singular and the plural in the phrases like the following::

Each cared for *his* own satisfaction.

Each cared for *their* own satisfaction.

Green suggests that if these sentences are used about a married couple, the plural form can mean that the wife cares for her satisfaction, and the husband cares for his, while the use of the masculine alone, might mean that both cared only for the husband's satisfaction. However, these two sentences prove also that only the plural is sex-neutral and refers to both sexes.

Despite its shortcomings (possible ambiguity and breaking number agreement), *they* is the form most likely to be generally accepted and used as a sex-neutral form. Nearly everybody prescribing the usage or hypothesising about which

pronoun is going to be used, mentions *they* (Bate 1978; Bodine 1975; Gastil 1990; Green 1977; Jochnowitz 1980; Jones 1990; Lind 1988; Miller & Swift 1989; Shear 1981; Switzer 1990; Weidmann 1984). Scholars point out that it has been used for many centuries; Bodine (1975), Visser (1963), McKnight (1928), Bolinger (1980) and Miller & Swift (1989) list several examples of the usage of *they* in the works of famous writers, starting from Shakespeare and Caxton. Sex-neutral *they* was used by writers, like Goldsmith, Eliott, Whitman, Shaw, Ruskin, Durrell, Thackeray, Mill, Scott, Dickens, Lewis, Fielding, Trollope and Austen. It is interesting to note that the majority of the writers using of this form were actually men.

Many scholars emphasise that, despite the prescriptivists' advice to use the masculine, *they* is still present in the language (Green 1977; Cooper 1984; Meyers 1989 and 1990; Sullivan 1983; for more details see section 2.1.3 in Chapter 2), it is popularly accepted and often used by educated speakers (Bodine 1975). Although this form is found especially in oral language, some scholars (like Bate 1978) argue that it may be accepted for written English as well. According to research (Gastil 1990; Langendoen 1970; Sklar 1983; and Valian quoted by Newman 1992; for more details see section 2.1.2), *they* appears to be more generic than other forms such as *he or she* or the masculine. This may be due to the frequent occurrence of forms like "They say..." which also refer to people in general. Jochnowitz (1980) actually suggests that indefinite *they* and the agentless passive are the same word. Moreover, *they* seems to be the logical choice for subjects with indefinite pronouns when the referent is clearly understood to be plural. Strangely enough, as Newman (1992) notices, *they* is not "the majority choice

among those who are often looked to as authorities in usage". Some nonsexist guidelines do not list it at all as a nonsexist form, or mention it only when suggesting pluralizing. Other "language authorities", like dictionaries or grammars, mention *they* solely in connection with indefinite pronouns and suggest that this form as acceptable as a generic only in informal English, or like *The Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* point out that "some people dislike this use" (see Hennessy 1994; and Sunderland 1994).

The dual-gender pronoun *he/she* is beside *they*, the most often recommended and used nonsexist alternative. Council of Europe Recommendation (1991), among others, suggests placing "feminine and masculine forms side by side (for substantives, personal pronouns, etc. and agreement in gender)." Although less often than *they*, *he or she* is also used in the sex-neutral sense by some well-known writers (Dubois & Crouch 1987: 29 quote examples from Whitman, Woolf and Nabokov; Bolinger 1980 quotes Fielding). Among the advantages of using the dual-gender pronoun, Weidmann (1984: 61) lists precision: "[he or she] is undoubtedly precise - provided no more than one male and or/one female person are/is referred to - and 'grammatically correct'".

The common argument used against this form is that it is long and clumsy. In speech, as it is often pointed out (see e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1978), that can distract the listeners from the main issue especially when the speakers make on the spot corrections, drawing special attention to "or she". According to Weidmann (1984:61) "he or she is clumsy because it is misaligned with the subsystem which has only monosyllabic members". Bolinger (1980), also claims that pronouns

should attract as little attention as possible, and should therefore be unstressed, which is not met in the case of *he or she*. Most scholars and stylebook writers who recommend this form (Miller & Swift 1989; Bolinger 1980; Jones 1990; or "Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications" 1987) do so with caution. Writers are usually advised to use it sparingly, and warned that repeating it can be monotonous.

Most authors criticising this form are not objective and use mostly emotional arguments, like:

he/she is visually distractive, looks too busy and sounds like a grudging concession, a cute curtsy, or a patronising bow to 'the ladies, God bless them'. (Shear 1981)

"he slash she" sounds like a replay of the Manson killing. (Cyra MacFadden quoted in Kirsznner & Mandell 1985: 186)

Similar emotional arguments are used against the shortened version of the dual-gender pronoun, namely *s/he* (some of the arguments against *s/he* are listed in section 4.5a in Chapter 4). The drawback of this form lies in the fact that it cannot be used in speech, and even in writing it can only be used in the subject position. However, as pointed in "On Balance" (1991: 8), this form is "neat and economical in writing" and can be used in teacher's books "that are not meant to be spoken anyway".

Interestingly, many authors writing on the subject of gender-neutral pronouns, even those who hypothesise or prescribe *they*, use the dual-gender pronoun in their own work. I have found examples with this form in e.g. Nilsen (1984), Richmond & Dyba (1982), Jones (1990), Albee (1981), Gastil (1990), Hook (1974),

Snizek & Jazwinski (1986), Wilson & Ng (1988) and Weidmann (1984). Moreover, my own research, (Ozieblowska 1991), demonstrated that the dual-gender pronoun is found more frequently than *they*.

Alternating between the masculine and the feminine forms is a technique employed by some writers, particularly those who dislike the use of *they* or *he* or *she*, because of stylistic or other reasons. Sometimes the authors decide to use one form with one particular antecedent, and the other form with another antecedent: e.g. Sternberg (1993) uses *he* in all references to *author* and *she* in all references to *reader*. Sometimes the authors explain the reasons for choosing a particular form for a particular antecedent. Fabb and Durant (1993: 88) quote a book where "the speaker is always referred to as 'she' - 's' for 'speaker' - and the hearer as 'he' - 'h' for 'hearer'". McConnell-Ginet (1989: 38) explains her method of alternating in the following way:

I am following many other authors in using both *she* and *he* as "generic" singular pronouns; but since I later discuss in more detail the hypothetical case of a woman talking with a man, the choice of pronouns is not entirely arbitrary.

Such technique, however, might be ambiguous. The readers might not understand it as a neutral technique, but rather as the specific pronoun reference. Moreover, alternating between the pronouns might also be sexist, if, for instance, the masculine is used with antecedents referring to people in prestigious, head positions, while the feminine is used in other instances. Frank & Treichler (1989: 160-161), discussing alternating in their guidelines, stress that such method cannot be applied at random, but requires special care to avoid accidental stereotyping. As an example of such accidental stereotyping, they

describe a lecture where the speaker used the masculine about a "good student" or a "conscientious professor", but switched to the feminine when referring to a student who is afraid to ask questions.

Many authors have suggested inventing a **new generic pronoun**. The oldest sex-neutral form, *thon*, dates back to 1884, and is the most long-lived; Miller & Swift (1976: 144) found out that this form was listed in 1959 in *Webster's Second International*. Some proposals (see e.g. in Baron 1986, Miller & Swift 1976 and 1989, Bolinger 1980; MacKay 1983; Hook 1974; Abdel Naby & Hilfi 1989; Gregersen 1979) include forms, like: *ha*, *co*, *thon*, *per*, *hesh*, *e*, *E*, *tey*, *na*, *hir*, *po*, *re*, *xe*. A few neologisms were sporadically used in some communities (Miller & Swift 1976 and Cheshire 1984 report the use of *co* in Virginia and Missouri), or adopted as a sex neutral technique in some journals, feminist dictionaries or novels. A few novels are listed e.g. in Miller & Swift 1989 and Henley 1987: 14-16. Miller & Swift 1976 also report the use of *tey/ter/tem* in a short-lived newspaper edited by the students of the University of Tennessee [1976] and Nilsen 1984 mentions a Florida school which adopted *E* for "he or she" and *ir* for "him/her" in their publications. The use of neologisms has never gone beyond some limited (mostly feminist) environment (see Frank & Treichler 1989: 30); although I have come across one author, not a feminist one, who uses *hrs* for "his or her" (Sir Kenneth Dover in the Preface to *Frogs*). Among anti-sexist guidelines, only "Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language" (1975) suggest the use of neologisms as a neutralising technique (they give *tey* as an example) and *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook* (Beard & Cerf 1992: 79) lists *co*, *tey* and *ve* as substitutes for *he*. Despite many proposals, or maybe just because of

this variety, most scholars are rather sceptical about any of these new forms to be adopted by the users of English. Miller & Swift (1989) assign this to the fact that native speakers usually subconsciously resist introducing new forms. Others point to the fact that introducing new forms which are not in the system, especially to a closed class like pronouns, is extremely difficult. Vallins (1969: 60) summarised it in the following way:

the introduction of a synthetic formation into the living language is almost as rare as the collision of two stars in the universe . . .

Finally, **explaining pronoun policy in the preface** is adopted as a nonsexist technique by some authors. This technique is particularly favoured by authors who are not satisfied with or have a particular dislike for the proposed gender-neutral pronoun forms. In most cases it is the authors who use the masculine pronoun in their books, but explain that the pronoun should be understood as referring to both men and women. Some authors (cited in Blaubergs 1980: 143) state that they use the masculine "for the sake of grammatical uniformity and simplicity" or to allow "the smooth flow of prose". The drawback of this method is pointed out by McConnell-Ginet (1989: 49):

A footnote explaining one's generic intentions does not suffice, since some readers will doubt the sincerity of that announcement and others will forget it.

Moreover, many readers may not read prefaces and even if they do, it is possible that by the time they come to a thousandth example with the masculine, they may have already a male image of a generic person, as is aptly illustrated by Morgan (1972: 8-9), when she discusses the ambiguity of *man* and *he*:

If you begin to write a book about man or conceive a theory about man you cannot avoid using this word. You cannot avoid using a pronoun as a substitute for the word, and you will use the pronoun 'he' as a simple matter of linguistic convenience. But before you are halfway through the first chapter a mental image of this evolving creature begins to form in your mind. It will be a male image, and he will be the hero of the story: everything and everyone else in the story will relate to him.

My research is not going to take into account all of the non-sexist techniques described above. The use of some of them, like pluralizing or rephrasing, can actually be very difficult to trace. It may be difficult to ascertain, for instance, whether the author uses a plural form to avoid sexism, or just because this form seems most suitable for stylistic or other reasons. Although I checked whether authors describe their pronoun policies, my main concern is with the third person pronouns used with singular antecedents referring to people of unidentified sex.

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CHAPTER TWO

SUMMARY OF PAST RESEARCH

2.1 Research on generic pronouns.

Although a great majority of literature on sexism has been devoted to theoretical discussions and hypotheses, there have been a number of experimental studies. Most researchers concentrated on three major areas. Firstly, some authors have collected opinions on sexist and non-sexist language. Grammar books and stylebooks have been examined in search of information on sexist language (including generics) and surveys have been conducted among the users asking for their opinion on the usage of sex-neutral forms and factors influencing this language change. Such information is of interest to me, as it has often concentrated on the members of academic staff, who are (or, more precisely, their work is) the object of my own research. The results of these studies can show the extent of general awareness of the generic issue among the users, which I can compare with the results of my own analysis.

Secondly, the research has been directed to see whether generic pronouns and nouns (especially masculine generics - "he" and "man", but also common-gender nouns denoting occupations) are understood generically: that is, whether they are interpreted by the users as referring to both sexes. Such studies can be of assistance in my work, because they can provide clues as to how the readers can possibly interpret generic statements and whether their interpretation can be influenced by social stereotyping.

Finally, there has been a number of studies of actual usage examining what generic forms are chosen by users, which is one of the aims in my investigation. Some researchers have compiled corpora with examples from written and spoken English, while others conducted sentence completion exercises, often accompanied by questionnaires to see whether there is any relationship between the pronoun usage and other factors, like subjects' sex, social status, or social stereotyping which can be the reason for understanding some antecedents as male- or female-related, and can thus influence the choice of pronominal representation. Both kinds of "usage" studies are relevant to my own investigation, which also examines the use of generic pronouns; however, both have pitfalls. Sentence completion studies can display the users' typical generic policies, but it is debatable whether they can reveal the problems of generic usage that the users might face in real communication. The sentences for completion stand in isolation and are often classic cases of generics, which means that they usually do not involve problems in reference or interpretation, like distinguishing between generic and specific reference or sex-neutral or sex-specific meaning. At the same time, some authors who have looked at "real" language have concentrated mostly on merely collecting examples with generics and calculating the number of occurrences of different forms, which means, that the generic forms were singled out, and thus literally "stripped" of their context. Moreover, as indicated by Newman (1992), in the majority of cases, such observational studies do not make comparative counts of frequency. Another problem with some of the corpuses is that researchers do not have uniform criteria for classifying a given form as a generic and some authors do

not even indicate what is regarded and collected as generic. This is partly the result of the wide range of meanings that is carried by the term "generic" (which was discussed in greater detail in the Introduction). Another reason may lie in the mostly ideological motivations for carrying out the research in the first place; Newman (1992), for instance, points out that researchers concentrated on finding examples with generic *they* to demonstrate that this form is frequently found in language and is therefore a likely substitute for the "sexist" generic *he*.

In an attempt to avoid drawbacks noticeable in previous observational studies I devote considerable time to describe the corpus and define the criteria for accepting a given usage as generic. Moreover, in the analysis of the corpus I often resort to explaining the context in which the sentence appeared, especially when the example is potentially ambiguous. I must nevertheless admit that, despite looking for examples in context, some examples have not always been possible to classify (see chapter 4, section 4.3, also chapter 5, sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). However, ambiguous cases are also a part of discourse and can therefore be a valuable source of information on the language.

2.1.1 Opinions on the sexist/non-sexist language

Many researchers have examined stylebooks, grammar books, etc., which might have shaped the user's writing style. Bodine ([1975] 1990) surveyed thirty three of the school grammars being used in American schools and found out that twenty eight of them condemned use of *he or she* and *they*. Randall (1985) examined fifty five texts (introductory texts for readers for a course in

interpersonal communication) with a copyright date of 1980 or later and discovered that very few of them (nine) mention sexist language at all. Sunderland (1994) examined twenty British pedagogical grammars published between 1972 and 1986, as well as three newer grammars published after 1987. The majority of the grammars mention *they* and non-*they* alternatives, however, as Sunderland notices "'Generic' *he* itself is still holding its head high in several PGs [pedagogical grammars]" (1994: 99). Moreover, the grammars usually list the alternative terms for the masculine with cautious statements that such forms are not generally accepted or used in all contexts. None of the grammars mentions the use of *they* with singular noun phrases, like *a teacher*.¹ Only a few grammars explain that the masculine should be avoided because of gender bias. Hennessy (1994) examines the gender issue, among others - generic *he*, in three British learners' dictionaries. She discovered that all of them include both *he* and *they* (as an [informal] anaphor to indefinite pronouns). However, only the "Oxford" dictionary² gives clear reasons for proscribing *he*, pointing out that this form is regarded by some people as discriminatory; the other two dictionaries, simply state that some people (especially women) do not like this form.

¹ Looking at *The Collins Cobuild English Grammar* (1990 London: Collins p.31) myself, I discovered that it does state that *they* can be used in reference to one person, but in the examples *they* is used only with indefinite pronouns, and singular noun phrases, e.g. *a young person*, or *the student*, appear with the dual-gender pronoun after the remark that *he or she* can be used instead of *they*, thus the user might come to the conclusion that it is safer to use *they* with indefinite pronouns and *he or she* with singular nouns.

² *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. (1989). Oxford: OUP.

Other authors have surveyed users, especially from academic circles, about their language usage and opinions on factors influencing language change. Bate (1978) examined administrative materials, print media, faculty meetings at the University of Oregon and audio taped interviews with some members of staff. The topic seemed to be of significance to the respondents, although no language forms were definitely preferred or discarded. The respondents generally showed acceptance for the *he or she* forms and a high degree of uncertainty about *s/he*. They often used the form *they* in conversation, although they did not regard it as standard English.

Henley (1987) quotes a questionnaire study of Henley & Dragun (1983) whose participants discussed what influenced the change in their language usage and led to adopting of the non-sexist forms. Forty three per cent of the participants listed their own reading or their own way of thinking as the most important factor. The requirements of others (authority or publishers) or the influence of articles and books on sexism were cited less often. Henley suggests that age and prestige may be an important factor as well; young people and people from prestigious groups are usually those who initiate changes. This result was confirmed by Cochran-Papatzikou (1988) whose study of the most powerful factors which may be responsible for language use indicated school type, gender and grade. The students at higher level of social status employed fewer biased forms, and female students usually used less biased language and were less likely to gender stereotype than male students.

Stewart et al (1990) studied the attitudes about sexist language of Otago University academic staff. The subjects were presented with sexist statements (based on examples regarded as sexist language by “Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in APA Journals” 1977; or “State Services Commission Guidelines”: e.g. sentences employing masculine generics, *man* and *he*, or revealing social stereotyping) and their task was to evaluate how sexist these statements were and to reveal their own attitudes towards the issue. Finally, they discussed the necessary means to encourage the use of non-sexist language in the university. Academic staff seemed to be aware of the sexist issue and generally were of the opinion that sexist language was inappropriate in a university situation. Some members of staff even reported a decrease in sexist language in their own use. Nevertheless, some sexist structures, particularly masculine generics, were regarded as appropriate. The study suggests that the students’ association, individual students and the media have been most visible in encouraging the use of non-sexist language, while university administration and central governments were listed less often.

2.1.2 Are generics understood generically?

Most of the experiments consisted in gap-filling or sentence-completing exercises. The subjects’ task was to supply a pronoun form or complete sentences, which were specially formulated to elicit generic forms. These exercises were sometimes accompanied by questions or surveys. Most well-known experiments of this kind are those by Moulton et al (1978), MacKay & Fulkerson (1979) and MacKay (1980b).

Moulton et al (1978) asked the students to write a story about a fictional character. The two themes, about a student's isolation in a coeducational institution and person's concern for physical appearance, were expressed using different generic pronouns: *he*, *he or she*, or *they*. The students chose most female characters for the stories with *he or she*, 21% more than with *he*. However, the context was also an important factor. More female characters appeared in stories about the concern for personal appearance than about a student. Interestingly, the percentage of female characters in a story about a student corresponded to the percentage of women students in the college of the subjects. Moulton et al (1978) were mostly concerned with the fact that gender-neutral terms do not seem to function generically but are usually interpreted as referring to males.

In MacKay & Fulkerson's study (1979), subjects listened to sentences with male, female or neutral antecedents and then answered the questions checking their comprehension of the pronouns. The experiment demonstrated that generic *he* is not neutral and is mostly interpreted as male. Also *she* was not interpreted generically but understood as referring only to females. In a later study, MacKay (1980b) also examined comprehension of chosen neologisms (like *e*, *E*, and *tey*). It turned out that the newly encountered pronouns were easily understood as sex-neutral by the students, while the masculine generic usually evoked masculine interpretation, even in neutral contexts.

Some experiments checked what visual images are generated by generic pronouns. In the experiment of Schneider & Hacker (1973) students were to

select pictures illustrating chapters in introductory sociology textbooks.

Students were given labels either with 'man' or sex-neutral expressions. Sixty four per cent of students who received labels with 'man' submitted pictures containing males only, whereas only about a half of those receiving more neutral labels submitted male-only pictures. At the same time the selection of pictures corresponded to stereotyped reality e.g. women were absent from pictures on crime and delinquency, while men dominated in pictures illustrating "urban life" and "economic behaviour".

Snizek & Jazwinski (1986) asked students to perform three tasks; to draw a picture of "one member of a group of living things", read an essay on the longevity of human life and discuss life expectancy of men and women, and, finally, to provide example names illustrating different occupational categories. In the instructions to the first two tasks the researchers used either gender-neutral terms ("person" or "human being") or gender-specific terms ("man"), while in the third task, the occupations were male- or female-related, or neutral. The results showed that generic masculine terms function similarly to gender-specific masculine terms as some grammatically neutral terms are often rated as masculine. Snizek & Jazwinski observed a correspondence between the pronoun forms chosen and the sex of the participants; women drew more pictures and chose examples about women.

Wilson & Ng (1988) examined sex-specific biases in visual images evoked by sentences with generic pronouns. A tachistoscope showed a sentence as well as a face for a very short time, so that the students, who were asked about the

gender of the faces they saw, might easily have been influenced by the pronoun rather than the face. The results confirmed that reporting of either male or female faces depended on the generic pronoun used. The experiment demonstrated also that both pronouns were understood first of all in their sex-specific, rather than generic sense.

Gastil (1990) re-examines the results of Cole, Hill & Dayley, whose experiment in 1983 supported the argument that the generic *he* does not evoke images any different than *he/she* or *they*. Undergraduates read sentences (half of which contained a generic) and visualised images. In Gastil's experiment the masculine generic evoked more (approximately twice as many) male images than either *he/she* or *they*, which contradicts Cole et al. Switzer (1990) asked children to write a brief ending to the same story, but each group of children had the story with only one of the three pronoun forms, *they*, *he or she*, or *he*, or with a noun 'the student'. Ninety three per cent of the children who heard a story with a masculine pronoun described males (only 6.7% described inclusive referents). The story with the pronoun *they* produced in 44.2% male imagery, 27% female imagery, and 28.8% sex-inclusive. The story with *he or she* form, generated 48.8% males as heroes, and 43.3% females (7.9% sex-inclusive).

Switzer concluded that although the dual-gender pronoun generated almost an equal number of male and female referents, it functioned sex-specifically rather than generically, as the children simply projected their own sex into the stimulus message. Pronoun *they* is, according to her, most sex-neutral, as it produces most sex-inclusive forms.

Most experiments found support for the claim that masculine generic is only a generic by name, because it is not used with all kinds of antecedents and is usually associated with male images. However, other researchers cast doubt on whether the gender bias can be eliminated by a mere change of a pronoun. Wise & Rafferty (1982) prepared a modified replication of Broverman's experiment followed by an addendum that asked the subjects (ninety seven students from introductory psychology course) in the 'gender-neutral' condition to indicate whether they had thought of a neutral, male, or female stimulus person. The data demonstrated that even the seemingly neutral term 'adult' and 'child' may be gender loaded.

Khosroshahi (1989) wanted to find out whether there is any correlation between changing the pronoun usage and the non-sexist way of thinking. Khosroshahi took college students, both those who tended to use the prescriptive *he* only ("traditional") and those who started using sex-neutral forms ("reformed"), who were to read a sex-indefinite paragraph, either with generic *he*, *he or she*, or *they*. The students were asked to draw images evoked by the paragraph. It turned out that, apart from "reformed" women, comprehension of sex-neutral pronouns remained the same. Moreover, all groups, except traditional women, were biased towards their own sex. Khosroshahi suggests that the person's sex may be an important factor of thinking neutrally, and that women are more likely to think neutrally than men. "[Reformed men's] language includes women: their thought does not, or at least not yet." (Khosroshahi 1989: 520). On this observation Khosroshahi comments that reformed men's language does not correspond to their thought and therefore only the findings concerning women

and traditional men might support the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Most research confirms that generic masculine forms are not understood generically and are often interpreted in terms of their gender-specific meaning. This actually corresponds to the findings from real language where *he* has been found considerably more often in its specific masculine sense than as a generic (see Graham 1975 and MacKay 1980a and 1983). Users are also exposed to more masculine than feminine nouns and pronouns (Faggen-Steckler et al 1974).

Although *he* has been found to promote sexist attitudes, it has also been discovered that adopting neutral language is a much more complex process than foreseen in different anti-sexist guidelines. Finding a real sex-neutral term is very difficult because even terms suggested as neutral in anti-sexist guidelines may be gender-loaded. Some terms may be more neutral than the masculine, but even they can bring to mind masculine images. Moreover, as Khosroshahi (1989) noticed, the bias may remain even if people change their pronoun usage. People often think in terms of their own sex or respond to stereotypes (Khosroshahi 1989; Switzer 1990 and Martyna 1978). Some scholars (e.g. Faggen-Steckler et al 1974) indicated that responding to stereotypes may be due to being exposed to it from an early age. Also, people's use of a given pronoun may often reflect reality. MacKay (1983: 43) observed, for instance, that the users' choice of pronoun often agreed with the percentage of men and women employed in professions given in sample sentences. Also Moulton et al (1978) observed a correlation between the percentage of female characters in a

story about a student and the number of female students in a college where the experiment was taking place.

2.1.3 What generic forms are used?

Some researchers gathered their data through gap-filling exercises (like Martyna 1978). The subjects were to fill in the pronoun forms. The sentences often differed in the nature of the antecedents. The antecedents were gender-neutral (like *person* or *student*) or gender-specific, (like *housewife* or *burglar*), used in singular or plural. The researchers often added filler sentences so that the subjects could not guess the purpose of the experiment.

Martyna (1978) and the followers (Joesting 1983 and Cochran-Papatzikou 1988) carried out a sentence completion study accompanied by a questionnaire about the subjects' sex, age, education, etc. In Martyna's (1978) experiment psychology students were asked to finish sentences with neutral, male-, or female-related antecedents (like, *doctor*, *nurse* or *person*, respectively). The results showed that the pronouns chosen by the students usually corresponded to the nature of the antecedent, e.g. *she* was used to complete a sentence about a nurse, *he* was used to refer to a doctor, etc. Martyna also observed differences between men and women interpreting the pronoun *he*. Men usually visualised males, whereas women reported an absence of imagery. Joesting (1983) gave fill-in-the-blank questionnaires to the participants of races and triathlons. She observed that more males than females used the masculine form, and more females than males used the dual-gender pronoun. In a similar sentence completion exercise

by Cochran-Papatzikou (1988) the masculine generic used by the students outnumbered *she* 2:1; and in tag questions even 8:1.

Green (1977) asked college students to match pronouns with different kinds of antecedents in thirty sentences. The antecedents were specific or generic (male and female-related), singular nouns, as well as plural nouns. The error rates indicated that the students have problems with sex-indefinite antecedents.

Even plural antecedents generated more errors than singular specific nouns.

Green commented on his results that "many students select pronouns according to gender rather than number - and *they*, *them*, and *their*, in particular, often function as singular pronouns."

In the exercise prepared by Langendoen (1970), forty-six students (thirty-two women and fourteen men) had to provide tag questions to a number of statements, some of which had indefinite pronouns or gender-neutral singular noun phrases as antecedents. In the statements with indefinite pronouns, students' answers showed that the pronoun used in the tag question often corresponded with the notional number of the indefinite pronoun in question; more students used *they* than *he* when the pronoun could refer to a group of people. The pronoun *they* did not appear with singular nouns: here the masculine was the main choice, even with referents like baby or child, where *he* outnumbered it by a two-to-one margin. The feminine was used in still fewer instances. Two examples showed that the choice of adjectives, like *handsome* or *pretty* could explain the use of the masculine or the feminine in references to *my cousin*. It is also probable that the choice of pronouns

depended on the respondents' own experience; for instance, the students might have identified antecedents like *one of my friends* with a real person. In another example, where the feminine was used by seventeen persons, Langendoen suggests that some of the female students might have also identified with an antecedent *my father's only child*.

Another method of obtaining pronoun forms was asking the students to write stories or essays. Meyers (1989 and 1990) asked her students to explain their concept of the educated person and checked the written samples for the pronoun usage and consistency. She discovered that the most popular forms were *they* and *he* (34% and 32% respectively), with the dual-gender pronoun chosen less often (22%). She contrasted her study with one done in 1982 by Wheelless et al, where the college writers in sentence completion exercises used *he* and *they* equally often (42%), but *he or she* was used very rarely (only 7%). Meyers also looked at the possible interaction between the pronoun choice and sex of writer. She found out that women chose more different approaches than men (and only women used the feminine as a generic). In the experiment by Richmond & Dyba (1982) the subjects were elementary and secondary school teachers from West Virginia who were given a description of a student and then were supposed to discuss the problems that student might have. They did a similar exercise a few days later after they had a short unit about sexist language. Richmond & Dyba observed a change in language used; 70% employed more non-sexist language and 40% used no sexist language at all in the second test, while 47% used sexist language in the first test and 82%

employed at least one instance of sexist language. The researchers concluded that the use of sexist language can be stimulated in a controlled environment.

A different type of research is collecting language data from already published sources. Cooper (1984) collected a considerable corpus, mostly from newspapers and magazines covering the period 1971-79. He also included some written speeches and remarks of members of the House of Representatives. His corpus revealed a decrease in the use of masculine generics, however, it did not show any considerable change towards sex-neutral usage. Masculine generic was the form most often found in his sources.

MacKay (1980a), trying to see whether generics can be substituted by the often recommended sex-indefinite *they* form, examined 108 sources (scientific and magazine articles and textbooks written around 1971) and found no instances of *they*, but 2913 occurrences of prescriptive *he*. The forms *she* and *he or she* constituted only 0.5% of generic pronoun occurrences. MacKay states that "over the course of a lifetime, exposure to prescriptive *he* for an educated American exceeds 10⁶" (1980a: 355) and this aside with other features like covertness, indirectness, early age of acquisition and appearance in prestigious sources, suggests that *he* works like an effective propaganda item (1980b: 448; also 1983: 47).

MacKay's results cast doubt on whether *they* is really as widespread as suggested by e.g. Bodine ([1975] 1990) or Miller & Swift (1989) and whether it can finally replace the masculine. MacKay found no instances of *they*, but other authors (Abbott 1984; Sullivan 1983) concentrated mostly on finding

examples with this pronoun. Abbott (1984) during eight years collected at random a hundred and fourteen examples with, as he called it, "unisex" *they* referring to indefinite noun phrases. He pointed out that examples of this kind are abundant and therefore should be accepted as standard British English. Sullivan (1983) and his students collected examples with generic pronouns used in reference to indefinite pronouns, like *somebody*, *everybody*, *anybody* and *nobody*. They discovered that the pronoun *they* was used in 74.9% of cases. Also Meyers (1990) quotes some examples of generic *they* taken from speech and writing. The pronoun *they* has also been often very often in tag questions. This was mentioned by MacKay (1980a), and indicated in a study by Langendoen (1970).

Although masculine generic proved to be predominant in the corpuses collected in the seventies, later research revealed that a change in generic usage was taking place. Nilsen's (1984) observation based on reading abstracts of young adult literature shows a decrease of the masculine pronoun usage. While in the years 1966-77 twenty seven pages had ten occurrences of *he*, none was observed in forty one pages written in 1980-82.

Lind (1988) looked at pronouns and other linguistic devices used in job advertisements in a few national British newspapers (*The Observer*, *The Times*, and *The Financial Times*) from 1986 until the beginning of 1987. He observed that the most commonly used form is *they*, often alternating with *he/she*. The masculine generic is rather rare and is used mostly with top jobs in business and finance, which could reflect some stereotyping at work. Randall (1985) also

gathered some examples with *they* in writing (including newspaper advertisements, newsletters, academic journals, non-fiction books).

Newman (1992) examined pronouns used in certain TV programmes (nine televised interviews broadcast on 20 June 1990). He found out that in coreference to "epicene singular noun phrases", *they* is found twice as often as *he*, which may show that the speakers try to avoid masculine generics. The dual-gender pronoun is very rare, and Newman attributes its use to on line editing.

The research on the generic forms in use shows that since 1970s there has been a slow change towards introducing non-biased forms and reducing masculine generics. This tendency is most visible in the media, like television or newspapers, but also in academic writing. The increased popularity of non-sexist forms might be due to the generally increased awareness of the problem of the people responsible for the media and editorial policies. Editors are often informed of research results, as in the case of Schneider & Hacker (1973) who sent the results of their research to some publishers. However, the editors themselves may not be sure which is the best policy. Meyers (1990) quotes a survey of American editors (Kingsolver & Cordry done in 1987) who were divided in their opinion whether *he or she* served better than *he*, but all disliked *they*. Moreover, even if the publishing houses issue their policy and circulate it among its authors, the final decision about adopting non-sexist language is often left to the authors, who sometimes may not wish to change

their pronoun usage (see Nilsen 1984, also section 4.5 and Appendix 2 in this dissertation).

The data from most corpora, both written and spoken sources, suggests that the most frequently used generic form is *they*, especially when the antecedents are indefinite pronouns. The dual-gender pronoun is rather rare and is often found alternating with *they* or, in the case of speech, it can possibly be the result of on line editing. The feminine pronoun is used only with female-related nouns as antecedents, which may cast doubt on whether it is treated as a true generic by the users.

According to research the users are exposed to more and more non biased language forms from formal published sources, but are themselves much slower in adopting these forms. More informal sources, exercises, or tests, demonstrate that the users still use *he* to a considerable degree, and only *they* is sometimes used in numbers comparable to that of the masculine generic. Some researchers claim that dictionaries and stylebooks, which either advocated the use of the masculine generic, or did not clearly indicate the reasons for not using this form might be held responsible for shaping students' pronoun policies.

In many cases the research does not give a clear answer as to the importance of factors responsible for the generic pronoun choice, as the results obtained by researchers differ. Some scholars have hypothesised that a classroom situation can influence students' choice. Richmond & Dyba (1982) attribute a significant role to the teachers, particularly in elementary school, to shaping their students'

language. In Nilsen's (1984) opinion, teachers should inform about sexist language, but they should not insist that their students use non sexist expressions. The results of some studies (Bate 1978; Adamsky 1981; Richmond & Dyba 1982) suggest that teachers who use gender-neutral forms may influence the students to do the same. Other authors, e.g. Meyers (1990), however, did not notice any considerable relationship between instruction and the students' language. Jones (1990) observed that the fact that her students used less sexist language might be due to the fact that they knew she was a feminist.

The user's sex is another factor, whose importance in shaping users' pronoun choices is difficult to ascertain in the light of research results. Some researchers (e.g. Frank & Treichler 1989) claim that people may project their own sex in generic statements. This might be the case in some of the examples from my previous research (Ozieblowska 1991: 96: examples from *The European* 15-17 Feb. 1991, and in Langendoen 1970). Khosroshahi (1989) compared it to ethnocentrism - favouring one's own ethnic group. Switzer (1990) quotes Martyna (1978) and Fisk, who observed self-imagining pattern in their subjects. Some of Martyna's male subjects, for instance, selected *he* for reasons such as "I think of myself". Switzer herself describes a similar pattern in her studies, but is not sure that self-imagining alone was the factor responsible:

Whether this was triggered by an automatic self-imagining response or by the power of he/she to elicit more sex-specific response is not clear. (1990: 79)

However, other researchers found no correlation between the subjects' sex and their pronoun interpretation or choice (see Cochran-Papatzikou 1988).

Summary of past research shows that there is a need to study current language in different domains, as the most recent corpora are not numerous and not large. More research is also necessary to determine factors which might be responsible for pronoun choice.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and general provisos

The aim of this research is to collect a considerable corpus of academic writing and observe the usage of generic pronouns. Each author's policy will be observed and analysed, taking into account consistency, the context where examples are found, the generic pronouns used and the analysis of different antecedents. Consistency is of particular importance because it can reveal more about possible stereotyping and methods used by the authors than a mere statistical approach. As McConnell-Ginet (1979) points out, a sudden shift of pronoun usage in an author who is otherwise very consistent is particularly worthy of closer examination.

Although it is not always possible to know the reasons lying behind the author's choice of pronoun form, yet a look at the context may at least give some hints and possible explanations for such choice. Jochnowitz (1980), for instance, quotes two examples from Lakoff's "Language and Woman's Place", where the linguist is referred to by *he*, but a teacher with *he or she*. For Jochnowitz this pronoun usage expresses social stereotyping: "The linguist is male, but the teacher's sex is left unspecified." (p. 200)

Jochnowitz, however, seems to overlook the possible explanation for the use of *he or she* in the immediate context. The example with the teacher is the only instance of the dual-gender pronoun in Lakoff (in all other examples Lakoff uses the masculine as a sex-indefinite form) and the full sentence reads as follows:

It is also important for *a teacher* to be aware of the language *he or she* is speaking: if *a woman teacher* unconsciously teaches "women's language" to *her* male students they may be in difficulties when they try to function in another country. (Lakoff 1975 [1989]: 47)

Whilst discussing *teacher*, Lakoff wanted to make a reference to a woman teacher; hence the use of *he or she* (see also McConnell-Ginet 1979: 74).

Studying examples in context can be crucial to understanding generic pronoun usage. Context may sometimes be indispensable in assessing whether pronouns refer to generic or specific entities as well as distinguishing sex-indefinite and sex-specific references. Sentences standing in isolation may not give enough clues. I have found the following example which on its own might look as a generic gender-neutral statement, where the feminine form *she* refers to a patient, who may be a man as well as a woman:

If a general anaesthetic was administered, *the patient* is extubated only after *she* is aware with full recovery of the laryngeal reflexes. (an example found in one of the books searched: Jacobsen 1992: 162)

Only when we know that this example appears in the section discussing "Obstetric and gynecologic recovery", do we realise that *she* is not sex-indefinite, but refers only to women patients.

Studying examples in context can also be of help in interpreting ambiguous examples. Sullivan (1983) gives the following example, where it is difficult to determine whether 'they' referred to an indefinite pronoun *someone* or to a completely different antecedent:

Someone said they were coming to the party. (Sullivan 1983: 273)

There may be cases when even knowing the context the pronoun usage is ambiguous. I have found a following example in the leaflet about child safety:

Never let your baby sleep in a baby nest or sleeping bag. They could suffocate (*A Guide to Child Safety* quoted in Ozieblowska 1991: 58).

The context does not give any clue as to whether the pronoun *they* refers to a child or a baby nest or sleeping bag. The sentence can mean either that the baby may suffocate or that a baby nest or sleeping bag can suffocate the baby. Such ambiguous examples are going to be added to the corpus and discussed separately.

One possible reason for inconsistent pronoun policy might be the nature of antecedents. Although most English nouns are said to be of common gender, that is, their morphology does not indicate gender (apart from some endings, like *-ette*, *-ix*, *-ess*), some antecedents might be described as male-related, female-related or neutral depending on whether we usually associate them with female referents (e.g. *nurse*), or male referents (e.g. *miner*) or whether we do not associate them with any sex (e.g. *person*). It is therefore possible to check whether some authors vary their generic pronouns depending on the nature of referents e.g. use *he* talking about a manager, but *she* about a nurse.

The existence of nonsexist forms in the formal language may be due to formal requirements or pressure imposed on the users by different institutions, professional associations and groups. The Recommendation issued by Council of Europe, numerous guides to writing, and some publishers' policies suggest avoiding the sexist bias. It is impossible to know which sources might have influenced the author. However, authors might

need to conform to the standards set by the publisher, or at least they might be acquainted with publisher's pronoun policy, if there are any. I have therefore made a survey among different academic publishers asking them if they have any generic policies and if so to what extent such policies are imposed on authors. The results from the survey will be analysed in Chapter 4 as part of the discussion.

The analysis according to the domain compares sex-indefinite pronouns used in each domain. We may hypothesise that linguistic books should contain the least sexist structures, because the problem of sex-neutral pronouns is mainly a linguistic problem, and therefore linguists should be the people promoting non-biased usage of the language. Also sociologists and psychologists, who have done some research in the field of generics, may be expected to avoid masculine pronouns. It is difficult to hypothesise which domains may be most or least sexist, but we can expect some stereotyping to take place in medical and economics books, where doctors and managers are traditionally thought to be men, while nurses and secretaries are expected to be women. Law has been chosen to see whether any changes have taken place, as law is the discipline which should avoid ambiguities and loops, which might appear if only masculine pronouns are used. Nilsen (1984) has pointed out that regulations displaying inconsistent pronoun policy, like using the masculine and occasionally *he or she*, may be interpreted as applying mostly to men, and only in some cases to both sexes.

At the start of my research I was mostly concerned with discourse options made by different authors. However, as the study progressed I became interested in the grammatical description of the generic as a grammatical category. As I have pointed out in the introduction, despite the abundance

of literature on generic issue, there does not seem to exist a thorough linguistic explanation of the generic. Few authors mention context or the nature of antecedents as part of a linguistic description of the generic as well as important factors determining the selection of a particular pronoun form as a generic. McConnell-Ginet (1979) and Newman (1992), for instance, point to the interrelationship between the nature of the antecedent and the choice of a pronoun anaphor. In the case of indefinite pronouns as antecedents their notional number can determine the choice of a particular pronoun form. Generic referents, on the other hand, being singular in form, but plural in a sense that they refer to an entire class, can be contrasted to hypothetical or exemplary referents referring to one particular person. The determiners used with singular noun phrases may also play an important role in the semantic analysis. McConnell-Ginet (1979) hypothesises, for instance, that *they* is unlikely to be used with definite noun phrases like *the child*. Such hypotheses can only be checked on the basis of real-language data.

The scope and the time allocated for this work has not allowed me to study the generic phenomenon in both written and oral modes, in formal and informal situations and used by different social classes. I will try to concentrate on the written, more formal aspects of academic language, since this may also have great impact on a large number of users. Although many linguistic changes are usually initiated by lower classes (see Milroy 1992), this particular change towards neutralising the language was undoubtedly the result of strong promotion among the educated classes. The use of nonsexist language is sometimes by itself regarded as a proof of belonging to academic circles. To say the least - sexist language is often regarded as

inappropriate as well as unclear. Kenneth Dover in his 1993 edition of the Aristophanic comedy *Frogs* explains that "The long-established convention that 'the masculine pronoun must be taken as including feminine' has now become quite unrealistic". Even those academic authors who strongly dislike the whole issue must, nevertheless, feel the pressure if they find it necessary to justify their masculine pronoun usage. In the "Introduction" to *Social Anthropology* (1982) Edmund Leach complains that a male anthropologist using masculine form as unmarked "risks his neck with feminist colleagues".

I believe that my choice of examining only academic writers can be justified. Not only can we witness the extent of adopting nonsexist language, but we can also discover how academics attempt to solve the problem. Moreover, academic handbooks (excluding strictly theoretical discussions), can be expected to have a high frequency of occurrence of sex-indefinite third person pronouns, in comparison to other domains (e.g. leaflets with instructions where the pronoun *you* is most often used). Thus academic books can be a valuable source of sex-indefinite pronoun forms, and can therefore be of help in providing a description of this grammatical phenomenon. I hope that the examples found in this domain can add to the information on the following issues, which are of main concern in this study:

- description of the sex-indefinite generic forms currently used in academic handbooks;
- description of situations where there is a need for a gender-neutral pronoun form
- description of context-mixing;

- analysing the extent to which the pronouns can reflect social stereotyping;
- a linguistic description of the 'generic'

3.2 The corpus and the method

The analysis of the language will be limited to the study of the generic pronouns used in academic handbooks from the domains of linguistics, law, medicine, economics and social sciences (psychology and sociology). These domains of language are not only likely sources of sex-indefinite pronouns, but also seem to be especially worth studying because of their role in promoting unambiguous language and because of the subject matter which can be particularly susceptible to social stereotyping. The role of education, media and law, is especially recognised in promoting nonsexist language, among others by the Council of Europe Recommendations (1991), which describe these domains as "leading vectors of social change".

Moreover, as it was well expressed by Jones (1990: 675):

No profession is more reliant on precision than law, and no profession is more important in shaping language use than education.

Medicine and economics are disciplines where the language may be influenced by the existing sexual stereotypes. Most medicine handbooks, for instance, use the masculine form in reference to *doctor* or *patient*, but are, nevertheless, often inclined to use *she* in reference to *nurse*, who is most often a woman according to social stereotypes:

The nurse may ask other questions when recording *the patient's* history, all of which are relevant to the total picture *she* will build up of *this individual* within *his* normal home environment. (an example I found in Ryall. R.J. 1984. *The Digestive System*. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. p 16)

The sources studied will be limited to the most recent publications. I am looking at the books whose first or new revised editions appeared between 1990 and 1993 and which contained at least two examples of generic usage or a note of the author's pronoun policy. I surveyed ten books from each domain and in each a selection of around fifty pages is examined. The whole list of books (including details about the chapters examined) is given in Appendix 1.

I am aware of the fact that in order to escape accusations of checking at random, the best way would be to check the same number of words in each book studied. However, without proper resources, means and time this was not possible. Moreover, even if all texts to be examined were entered into computer, finding examples with the generic would still require manual checking; the computer might of course have listed all the pronoun occurrences, but it cannot decide which of these are generic, or even which pronoun refers to which antecedent (e.g. because of the distance between pronoun and antecedent) and whether the pronoun form depends on the context. Some of the problems can be illustrated with the following example:

Obviously, these sequences are much more complex than the corresponding ones in (19) and (20). However, the complexity is the price the speaker must pay to ensure successful communication. In other words, *they* provide the most relevant means for communicating the information in question. (an example from the present corpus: Blakemore 1992: 36)

The computer search might list *they*, but the question is whether it can locate the proper antecedent. The antecedent of *they*, namely *these sequences*, can be found two sentences before, thus it is at a distance from the pronominal reference. The computer might be programmed to find the

nearest antecedent which agrees in number with the pronoun form. Then, however, it could possibly overlook all the cases where the grammatical agreement is violated. The pronoun *they*, which is now used both with singular and plural antecedents, can be particularly difficult for a computer search.

The disadvantage of the manual search, on the other hand, is that it is much more time-consuming and in the time allocated for my research I was unable to collect a corpus which might be statistically significant. However, statistics is not the main concern of this study. I am not merely interested in calculating the number of examples used by different authors, or the number of occurrences of particular sex-indefinite forms. The main aim of the research is to look at the usage, the statistics being of less importance and serving as an illustration rather than the basis for conclusions.

Moreover, some of the discussed phenomena are difficult to depict statistically. Statistics, for instance, may not indicate that the author who uses both the masculine and the feminine is consistently alternating these pronoun forms.

The pronoun usage is checked for consistency and in the case of varied generic usage, the percentage of different generic usage is calculated.

Usually it is the first chapters of around fifty pages which are checked. Occasionally further chapters are preferred because of the subject matter which may suggest that referents of interest to the researcher might be used. For example, the chapter entitled "Nursing the Child" (Chadwick & Tadd 1992; chapter 7) is likely to contain references to *nurse* as well as to *child*, and both antecedents are worth studying; *nurse* because of social stereotyping, and *child* because it can be used not only with single-gender

pronouns but also with the neuter pronoun. Similarly, pronoun usage in Chapter 12 in Vincenzi & Marrington (1992), "Nationals of European Community Countries and Their Families", may reveal whether "nationals of European Community" mean men and women, or whether typical European Community citizens are presented as males and "their families" consist of wives and children.

In all books the preface, acknowledgement and introduction are examined in search of a statement of pronoun policy. Some authors may explain in the beginning of the book what pronouns are going to be used throughout the book. However, it is possible that despite the policy, the authors might use referents and pronoun forms other than indicated. Typical exceptions to authors' pronoun policies are indefinite pronouns, which are often used with the form *they*. Sometimes the authors' policy refers specifically to one type of referent and therefore there is no explanation as to what pronouns are going to be used in other cases. For instance, Houston & Lewis (1992: xiii) explain that they are going to use *he* in reference to a director. Checking a few chapters, I found out that the authors used other antecedents, some of which do not refer to the main theme of independent director; there were also a few examples when a pronoun other than the masculine was used. I have decided, therefore to include all examples found.

It seems necessary to state which examples are going to be collected. In the summaries of the research which have been done previously, the researchers usually state that they collect generics without giving any explanation of what they consider as a generic form. Some, like Sullivan (1983), discuss generics on the basis of examples of pronouns coreferring with indefinite pronouns. Faggen-Steckler et al (1974) decide to call only 'man' and 'man'

compounds generic nouns. This seems to be limiting all the generic usage possibilities.

I am interested in all sex-indefinite uses of the third person pronominal references (especially those mentioned by Mühlhäusler & Harre (1990) and Bodine ([1975] 1990), like pronouns used in generalisations, or cases of exemplification, cases where the referent is an anonymous person). I take into account both generic and specific references, but exclude sex-specific references, that is the cases of generic usage in reference to one-class group, when a class is understood to be entirely men or entirely women.

The main criterion for including the example into a database is that the referent's sex is difficult to be inferred from the context. I am however excluding examples with generic "one" and "man". *One* is excluded because being neutral itself, and having its own forms like *one's* or *oneself*, it does not require a special neutral form. Nor can it be used with various antecedents. Generic *man* is excluded because its male connotation is so strong that it is always used with masculine pronouns (see Schneider & Hacker 1973). Its strong association with 'male' makes it impossible to be used in reference to women, which is illustrated by numerous examples starting from "Sophia is a man" (see Moulton et al 1978), where "Sophia" substitutes "Socrates" in a minor premise of a well-known syllogism "All men are mortal". I also exclude examples of pronouns used in quotations from other books, which includes also regulations. However, they are going to be taken into account (especially in the analysis of legal handbooks) in examination of a possible correspondence in pronoun usage. Any ambiguous cases are discussed separately and excluded from the database (they are not incorporated in the statistical tables).

The basic unit of the study is a part of the text containing anaphoric or cataphoric pronoun reference to antecedent whose grammatical properties may be described as [+ singular], [+ human] and [+ sex-indefinite]. That means that I include among others common gender nouns as well as proper names used in an exemplary sense found in a context from which the referent's sex cannot be inferred. The unit of the study is not necessarily one sentence. In many cases the pronominal reference is not made in the immediate contexts to the antecedent, but can be found in the next sentence or even several sentences further. Moreover, one sentence can contain two or more units. If the same antecedent is referred to with different pronouns, then each pronoun reference is treated as a separate unit. Also when there are pronoun references to different antecedents, the antecedent and corresponding pronoun each constitutes a separate unit. The following example I found in Blakemore (1992), has two units: one with *speaker* as an antecedent and the masculine pronoun, and the other with *hearer* and the feminine pronoun:

... *a hearer's* interest in what *the speaker* means will often lead *her* to ignore the fact that *his* words mean something else. (an example from the present corpus: Blakemore 1992: 5)

I treat as one pronominal realisation each of the occurrences of the same pronoun form be it in the subject or object form, or in a possessive or reflexive form; e.g. *he*, *him*, *his*, *himself* are treated as a masculine reference (coded *m*); *he or she*, *he/she*, *s/he*, *him or her*, *him/her*, *his or her*, *his/her*, *himself or herself*, *him/herself* as a dual-gender pronoun (coded *mf*). In the following example, by the same author, there are three pronominal references to *communicator*: *he*, *him*, and *his*, but all of them are masculine:

But of course *a communicator* will have *his* own aims and interests, and these may lead *him* to give the audience

information whose effect is less than that of other information that *he* could have given... (an example from the present corpus: Blakemore 1992:35)

Thus, the description of the token will be: antecedent: communicator, pronoun: masculine.

As far as singularity of the antecedent is concerned I should stress that there is often a difference between grammatical and notional number. Some grammatically singular antecedents, like *everybody*, may be notionally plural. Also, as Newman (1992: 458) notices, classifying generic nouns as notionally singular or plural can be difficult "because they refer to whole classes by a single instance, combining both qualities at once". By calling the antecedent singular I mean its grammatical form is singular, which means that it requires a singular form of the accompanying parts of speech (verbs or pronoun forms) in agreement. A singular antecedent can be therefore, one noun like, *a doctor* or *the translator*, an indefinite pronoun like *everybody* or *no one*, or a pair of nouns joined by a conjunction *or*, like *a father or mother*. I exclude nouns in plural form, like *doctors*, *translators* and pairs of nouns joined by a conjunction *and*, like *a mother and a father*. However, it is reported (e.g. by Metcalf 1984) that antecedents in the plural form can nowadays be found with the singular form of pronouns (like *he* or *she*). Such cases, if found, will be discussed separately together with other ambiguous cases.

All the examples collected were entered into a database (software Database 3+). Every entry contains the following information:

- 1) source; author(s)' name, date of publication and page number, e.g. Pepper 1992:39

- 2) publisher; the name of the publisher, e.g. Routledge or CUP
- 3) domain; whether the text is in the domain of medicine, linguistics, etc.
- 4) an example; fragment of the text containing both antecedent and pronoun reference
- 5) antecedent; the noun (or noun phrase) or a pronoun to which the generic pronoun refers,
- 6) the description of the antecedent; whether the antecedent is a pronoun or a noun. In addition, noun phrases are described as definite (preceded by e.g. *the*), indefinite (preceded by *a*, *an*); preceded by quantifiers (e.g. *each*, *every*, *no*) or disjunctive phrase (e.g. *a mother or father*), while in the case of pronouns indefinite pronouns (e.g. *everybody*), are distinguished from other pronoun forms (e.g. *each*)
- 7) generic pronoun used, which is coded in the following way: m - for masculine pronoun *he*, f - feminine pronoun *she*, mf - for dual-gender pronoun *he or she*, *he/she*, fm - dual-gender pronoun starting with feminine pronoun *she or he*, *she/he* and *s/he*, pl - plural pronoun *they*

A typical entry looks like this:

- Baker 1992: 222
- Routledge
- linguistics
- In the final analysis, a reader can only make sense of a text by analysing the linguistics elements which constitute it against the backdrop of his/her own knowledge and experience.
- reader
- indef [a]
- mf

The database helps to organise and classify all the examples in order to facilitate the analysis of particular parameters. It can, for instance, provide reports on the sex-indefinite pronoun usage of a given author or on the pronoun forms used with a particular antecedent. However helpful such reports can be in the discussion of the corpus, they cannot offer a complete picture of the linguistic category studied here. To paraphrase Baker's example: in the final analysis, a reader can only make sense of the sex-indefinite pronoun reference by analysing its linguistic properties against the backdrop of his/her experience and, I would add here, against the context in which the pronoun appears.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

4.1 General remarks

This chapter presents the findings, and elaborates on factors, like stereotyping or the kind of antecedent, which according to some researchers might influence pronoun choice. Section 4.2 analyses authors' pronoun policies according to domains. As most authors do not give any information about their pronoun policies (only four make a note in the preface; see Appendix 1, p 212, 216, 218-19), the observation of the predominant pronoun forms used by a given author can be the only indication of this author's pronoun policy. What I call the author's main policy is the pronoun which the author uses in more than fifty per cent of all pronoun occurrences of this particular author. Section 4.3 is concerned with some of the problems I encountered in collecting and classifying the examples. Section 4.4 examines a possible correlation between the nature of the antecedent and the choice of the anaphoric pronoun; section 4.4.1 discusses the syntactic characteristics of the antecedents, while section 4.4.2 is mostly concerned with their semantic meanings, and especially whether the choice of pronoun can reflect social stereotyping. Finally, section 4.5 shows the results of the survey I conducted among some British publishers and offers a comparison of the authors' and publishers' policies.

The corpus is summarised in statistical tables found at the end of the dissertation. However, as I stressed in Chapter 3, statistics cannot always offer a clear and complete picture of the findings. I have discovered, for

instance, that there may be a discrepancy between the number of occurrences of a given pronoun and the number of authors who decide to use this form as their main policy. The sample of economics texts shows that there are as many authors whose main policy is the masculine, as there are authors who use nonsexist forms; however authors who use *he* have twice as many occurrences of this pronoun than the number of the occurrences of nonsexist forms chosen by the other authors. Moreover, more than half of the occurrences of the masculine are found in just two books. Thus if we looked only at the number of examples, we might come to the conclusion that the masculine prevails, while in fact *he* is the prevailing form simply as a result of two authors using a lot of masculine forms. As most authors vary their pronouns, it was sometimes difficult to assess whether such variation reflected a conscious choice of alternating pronouns, or was simply the result of "sloppiness". Some examples were also difficult to classify as sexist or nonsexist; for instance, how to treat the masculine used by an author who states in the preface that this form should refer to both sexes? The author intends this form to be neutral, but will the readers understand it as such? The feminine can be even more difficult to classify; on the one hand it is regarded by some as a nonsexist (although not necessarily neutral) technique, on the other hand it can also reflect social stereotyping. I have decided to classify as sexist all the instances of the masculine, as well as the feminine used in coreference to antecedents like *nurse*, *secretary* or *person in care* where it can reflect the assumptions that the referents are necessarily women.

The discussion is illustrated by examples which seemed representative of a given author, with the name of the author(s) and the page where the example appears (for full references see Appendix 1). For the sake of clarity I quote instances of the author's pronoun usage in full sentences,

which means that in some cases the illustrative examples contain a few research units. This is the case when there are several antecedents or two different pronoun forms referring to the same antecedent. In such cases the different antecedents or pronoun forms are distinguished through underlining. Occasionally I made use of the bold typeface to indicate the phrase which seems to be responsible for the pronoun choice. In some cases the texts analysed by an author might have influenced the authors' choice. Fragments of such texts are quoted for comparison, but are not numbered: only examples which have been included in the database are numbered.

4.2 The analysis of examples according to authors and domain

4.2.1 Economics

A. The statistical details about the economics sample can be found in Table 1, p 232. The generic pronouns used in the sample from economics are: masculine pronoun *he*, feminine pronoun *she*, plural pronoun *they* and the dual-gender pronoun *he/she* or *he or she*. There are no examples with the neuter pronoun *it* or forms like *s/he*, *she/he* and its variation *she or he*. Only in one book do the authors include a note on their generic pronoun policy: Houston & Lewis (1992) explain that they are going to refer to a *director* with the masculine pronoun (see also Appendix 1, p 212 for full quotation) but other antecedents and other pronoun forms are found in their book as well. Only three books have a consistent pronoun usage: Pepper (1992) and Weller (1992) use masculine pronouns in all cases and Kohli et al. (1991) use the dual-gender pronoun *he or she*. The authors of three books, Houston & Lewis (1992), Tack (1992) and Kassarian & Robertson (1991), do not have one pronoun policy, but display a preference for one particular generic form - in all three the masculine constitutes more than 80% of all generic pronouns. One author, Craven (1992) has

almost an equal number of masculine and other forms (50.91% [twenty eight tokens] and 43.64% [twenty four tokens] respectively); in the first two chapters Craven tries to distribute pronouns evenly as he uses the masculine in the first chapter, and the feminine in the second; however the remaining chapters have mostly masculine forms. The remaining four books display usage of different gender-neutral generic pronouns. The overall picture of generic pronoun policies used in economics books shows that there is a slight dominance of nonsexist pronoun forms over sexist (mostly masculine; there is only one example of the feminine used in the sexist way); four authors' main policy is to use the masculine, five authors use gender-neutral forms and one author alternates the masculine and the feminine, which is usually regarded as one of the nonsexist techniques. However, taking into account the number of pronoun occurrences, the masculine prevails, with two hundred and eighty six occurrences out of three hundred and ninety nine (more than 70% of all the generics). It is noteworthy that the authors whose main or only pronoun policy is to use the masculine generic, use this form very often; for instance, there are thirty seven occurrences of the masculine generic in Houston & Lewis (1992), a hundred masculine generics in Pepper (1992), and eighty five in Tack (1992), whereas the number of tokens in authors who try to use nonsexist forms oscillates around ten; only Bryce (1991) has forty four and the above mentioned Craven (1992) has fifty five. This might indicate that the authors try to avoid the masculine generic by limiting the number of generic forms altogether, probably by using other techniques, like pluralising or rephrasing.

B. Bryce (1991) employs four different pronoun forms as generics: *he*, *she*, *he or she* and *they*. Sometimes several forms appear side by side, which can be best illustrated by the following example, where the same

antecedent *person* has three different coreferential pronoun forms – the masculine, the feminine and a dual-gender pronoun:

- [1] What are *this person's* concerns about status? Will *he* worry about losing face? Can I help *her* to enhance *her* status? Does *he or she* have the right contacts?... Can I trust *her* to say what *she* thinks... Does *he* trust me or do I need to prove myself? (Bryce 1991: 52)

Bryce's varying pronoun usage can also be seen in his examples with *a person* where he uses both *he or she* and *they*:

- [2] Do I like and respect *this person* enough to deal with *them*? (Bryce 1991: 40)
- [3] Once *a person* starts to build visions of the future, *he or she* is closed to being committed. (Bryce 1991: 46)

The two above examples might suggest that *he or she* is used in the subject position, while *they* in other forms. However, in the following example the dual-gender form is used in object form:

- [4] *An effective senior manager*, with good people skills, can, through modelling, train the managers under *him or her*. (Bryce 1991: 50)

The only consistency observable in Bryce is the usage of *they* in coreference with indefinite pronouns, irrespective of whether the notional number of the pronoun is singular or plural:

- [5] ...if you walk, speak and sit with the quiet confidence of *someone* who knows what *they* are doing... (Bryce 1991: 42)
- [6] Thus personal power is an inner strength and is available to *anyone* regardless of *their* seniority. (Bryce 1991: 28)

In example [5], Bryce refers to the experience of the reader, so "someone" is one person who is the reader. Example [6], on the other hand, can be paraphrased as "All people have personal power" and thus *anyone* is notionally plural. Pronouns *they* and *he or she* constitute 86.37% of all the generics in Bryce. There are only a few examples with single-gender pronouns: apart from example [1], the masculine pronoun appears also in

coreference with a *negatively powerful leader, clever manager and a subordinate who is consistently performing under par*), whereas the feminine pronoun corefers with *one of your staff [who] is persistently poor at timekeeping*). Instances of single-gender pronouns might suggest that the author wanted to give an example of one particular individual, and not a representative of the whole class. However, the choice of single-gender pronouns might reveal author's covert sexism.

Craven's (1992) technique seems to be alternating single-gender pronouns, *he* and *she*. However, he does not alternate forms at random, changing pronoun forms from one sentence or paragraph to another. Craven tries to be more consistent, and he chooses one form, the masculine, as a generic in Chapter 1, and the feminine as a generic in Chapter 2. Thus in Chapter 1, all generic statements about *an individual* or *person* are made with *he*, as in:

- [7] The simplest way would be to assert that *an individual's* personal interests are based purely on things that affect *him*. (Craven 1992: 10)
- [8] This is a familiar ground to economists who often assume that *each person's* preferences depend only on *his* own consumption of goods, saving and time spent working. (Craven 1992: 10)

In Chapter 2, on the other hand, *individual* (including *individual i* or simply *i*), and any other antecedents are coreferring with the feminine pronoun, as in:

- [9] *Each of our n individuals* holds a preference concerning the alternatives (for the moment we are unconcerned whether the alternatives are actually available to *her*) (Craven 1992: 14)
- [10] If *i* [= individual *i*] is faced with a choice between *a* and *b*, and prefers *a* to be then *she* chooses *a*;... (Craven 1992: 19)
- [11] We may observe *a house-seller* refuse an offer of \$50,000 for *her* house and thus conclude that *she* prefers to have the house rather than \$50,000. (Craven 1992: 16)

In Chapter 3, as we might expect, Craven again uses masculine forms as generics coreferring with different antecedents: *individual*, *individual j* or simply *j*, *person*, *voter*, *Communist supporter*, *Green supporter*, *Liberal candidate*, or *dictator*. It is worth noticing that apart from the change of the generic pronoun in Chapters 2 and 3, Craven also changes exemplary individuals; from *individual i* (who is a "she"), to *individual j* (who is a "he"). However, in a brief browse through the next chapters I discovered that only masculine forms are used, which proves that the technique to alternate pronouns in different chapters is not employed consistently in the whole book.

Another exception to the rule to alternate masculine and feminine pronouns is the use of *they* in coreference with indefinite pronouns *everyone* and *someone*.

[12] This is the weak Pareto condition that a is the sole choice from {a,b} if *everyone* prefers a to b whatever *their* other preferences may be. (Craven 1992: 35)

[13] However, when *someone* has a monopoly power that allows *them* to influence prices or wages significantly, [...] *someone* may be able to gain an advantage by stating an untrue preference. (Craven 1992: 6-7)

However, *someone* is used in one case also with a masculine form:

[14] ... if I know *someone* who would flog people who park cars in restricted areas, might I then ignore *his* views on the appropriate punishment for murder? (Craven 1992: 32)

It is possible that the author means here one particular person: one particular person whose views are too extreme, and therefore should better be disregarded in other matters.

Foxall's (1990) main technique is to use the dual-gender pronoun *he or she*:

[15] For instance, before doing all of *his or her* monthly grocery shopping at one-stop hypermarket, *the buyer* may emit a series of behaviours... (Foxall 1990: 45)

[16] *A car-owner*, for instance, spends some of *his or her* free time cleaning the vehicle, some time maintaining it, and some time driving it. (Foxall 1990: 51)

In the two examples above this technique seems to break the social stereotyping: we might expect, for instance, that a person buying groceries is a woman, and a car-owner, especially somebody who is cleaning or maintaining a car, is a man. It is worth pointing out that the car owner in example [15] is referred to as *he or she*, but a few sentences later Foxall uses the pronoun *they* although he is still discussing the car-owner (just expressed by a different antecedent):

[17] Assume, for instance, that in the absence of restrictions, *an individual* allocates far more time to driving than cleaning and maintaining *their* vehicle. (Foxall 1990: 52)

There is also an example where both *he or she* and *they* forms appear side by side coreferring with the same antecedent, *consumer*:

[18] In the process of learning, *the consumer's* motives, attitudes, and comprehension of the brand determine the degree of confidence *he or she* is willing to place in it, *their* purchase intentions and actual purchase behaviour (or its absence). (Foxall 1990: 10)

There are a few single-gender pronouns:

[19] For example, after suffering damage to *his* taste buds, *a consumer's* eating spicy foods is no longer reinforced. (Foxall 1990: 44)

[20] For example: *a customer* is likely to walk past a store where *her* complaints have met with abusive outbursts on the part of the salesperson. (Foxall 1990: 41)

The usage of single-gender pronouns in the two examples above might suggest that Foxall wants the readers to visualise just one specific person,

especially that he starts with the phrase "for example". A similar phrase ("for instance") starts examples [15] and [16], where a dual-gender pronoun is used, but the statements about *the buyer* and *the customer* can be true of all buyers and car-owners, whereas, *a consumer* and *a customer* in examples [19] and [20] are not true of all consumers and customers: a typical consumer does not have problems with taste buds, as well as (hopefully) not all customers are treated in unpleasant way by the salespersons.

Houston & Lewis (1992) are the only authors in economics sample who include a note on their pronoun policy. They explain that they are going to use masculine pronouns in reference to a director 'for the sake of brevity and convenience' (see full quotation in Appendix 1, p 212) and a brief browse through the book proved that the authors were using this form in most cases referring to director, even if antecedents other than *director* are used:

[21] They [= opinions reported] also indicate how best *the independent director* can make *his* contribution effective. (Houston & Lewis 1992: xii)

[22] One of the key requirements for effectiveness in the role is for *the candidate* to understand what *he* is entering, and to have done *his* homework thoroughly. (Houston & Lewis 1992: xi).

Although the masculine is Houston & Lewis's generic policy, there are a few exceptions to the masculine. One of them is the dual form *he or she*

[23] Probably the most important single factor in determining whether *an individual* is appointed, is how well *he or she* is known to the 3i executive responsible for the case. (Houston & Lewis 1992: 40)

The following example is particularly interesting as it starts with a masculine reference to a director, but in the next pronominal reference

the authors add "or she", as if to indicate that in this case the candidate might also have been a woman

[24] GKR was asked to find *the new-non-executive director*, who should have a first-class pedigree in marketing, [...]. *He* should also have been a main board director of a listed company. As in all searches, the briefing process is crucial, and focused on personality which is often more important than for an executive position. *He (or she)* should be someone with whom the Chairman and Chief Executive could develop a relationship of trust and very quickly form a rapport. (Houston & Lewis 1992: 38-9)

A possible explanation for the change in the pronominal reference in example [24] can be found in the context; the authors refer here to a particular case, where the person who was finally employed by GKR was a man. Thus, writing about the candidate for the job, Houston & Lewis might have had this particular person in mind. The addition of "or she" might serve the purpose of indicating that the authors talk of any person, who was to become a director and that the described qualifications were required of any candidate for the job (and there may have been women among them) and did not specifically refer to the qualifications of the person who was finally elected.

Houston & Lewis resorted three times to the use of *they*. All three occurrences are worth a closer examination. One of them is presented here in full context (it is one full paragraph):

[25] **Independent directors** are only as good as the chairman will allow them to be. It is fruitless for *a competent person* to join a badly run board – that is unless *they* have the proxy vote of a large block of shares. It says little for *an individual's* reputation and judgement if *he* accepts a directorship only to discover the board's work is paralysed and *he* has to resign. (Houston & Lewis 1992: 6)

The paragraph contains two pronominal references *they* and *he*. Despite different antecedents, example [25] discusses the same person, the candidate for a post of independent director, which makes it difficult to

explain the change of pronoun reference. We may only wonder whether *they* does not refer back to *independent directors* mentioned in the previous sentence, if the board consists of many directors, who (together) "have the proxy vote of a large block of shares".

In the other examples, the use of *they* might be explained by a notional plurality of antecedents:

[26] Do not feel *everyone* has to speak or question every issue just to show *they* are alert. (Houston & Lewis 1992: 54)

[27] *No shareholder* can sensibly expect an independent director to know as much about a company as the executives; the most *they* can reasonably expect is for an individual not to be afraid to ask the right question and become informed. (Houston & Lewis 1992: 57)

Everyone in example [26] refers to the interview situation, and is used in reference to all other people interviewing the candidate (chairman and other directors). Thus, *everyone* in this example is clearly plural, and the pronoun *he* might look odd in this sentence. The same might be said about the use of *they* in coreference with *no shareholder*; companies do not have one shareholder, but several, so "no shareholder" actually means "none of the (many) shareholders".

Kassarjian & Robertson (1991) display a preference for a dual-gender pronoun *he or she*, whose first instance appears already in the preface, where the authors refer to the future users of the book:

[28] A number of academic journals focusing on consumer behaviour research are now available and some thirty full length books are in print from which *an instructor* can select material compatible with *his or her* approach to the subject. (Kassarjian & Robertson 1991: vii)

The use of the dual-gender pronoun underlines the authors' conviction that the readers of their book might be men and women.

Two more examples with the dual form are particularly interesting:

[29] Often the criterion used in these studies is *the consumer's* own account of *his or her* purchasing behaviour. (Kassarjian & Robertson 1991: 291)

[30] Not only was *the salesperson* rated as 'useful', but *he or she* was also chosen as the single most useful information source by 41% of the sample. (Kassarjian & Robertson 1991: 9)

Kassarjian & Robertson discuss the results of consumer surveys and the use of *he or she* in coreference with the *consumer* and *salesperson* might reflect the fact that consumers and salespersons surveyed by the authors were men as well as women.

There is only one example where the authors do not use the dual-gender pronoun:

[31] ... this pre-existing awareness and knowledge is derived from environmental scanning [...] or 'incidental learning' (e.g. having *a friend* demonstrate *her* new appliance while visiting *her* house),... (Kassarjian & Robertson 1991: 20)

By using a single-gender form, the authors might want the readers visualise one person, who must therefore be either a man or a woman (in this case the choice of a feminine pronoun suggests a female friend).

Kohli et al. (1991) have only three instances of generics, all of which are the dual-gender pronouns *he or she*. The small number of examples may suggest that on the whole the authors preferred to avoid using singular pronoun references. It is also worth pointing out that all three examples are on the neighbouring pages 7-8 (Chapter 2 has no generics at all). As an illustrative case I have chosen a sentence where the generic pronoun appears in the reflexive case, which is the least numerous in my corpus in comparison to other cases (subject, object or possessive):

- [32] If the firm wanted to retain a particular worker, it could do so only by making an offer that was so attractive that *the worker himself or herself* decided to stay on. (Kohli et al. 1991: 8)

OECD's [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] "Private pensions and public policy" contains articles written by different authors, who generally use very few generics. Chapter 6, for instance, has only one occurrence of generic, *he or she*, chapter 7 has two (one masculine and one *he or she*) and chapter 1 has three examples (one *they* and two dual-gender pronouns). Chapter 8 contains no instances of generics at all. Generally, the authors seem to prefer sex-neutral forms, especially the dual-gender pronoun:

- [33] Benefit adequacy concerns have focused on *the individual*. But disability or premature death may prevent *him or her* from collecting retirement benefit. (OECD 1992. 9. p. 14)

There is also one occurrence of *they*.

- [34] *The higher earner* may be disadvantaged in private pensions systems (as *they* may be in public systems)... (OECD 1992. 9. p. 10)

The only masculine pronoun form is found with the indefinite pronoun *everybody*.

- [35] From a life-cycle perspective, inter-generational transfer need not result since *everybody* is paying contributions during *his* active life and receives benefits when retired. (OECD 1992. 9. p.104)

The use of the masculine is surprising as indefinite pronouns are often referred to with *they*. Moreover *everybody* often has a plural connotation and can be seen as plural in the above example. The choice of the masculine might possibly be governed by the singular forms of the verbs used in agreement to *everybody*.

Pepper (1992) has a consistent pronoun policy - in all one hundred pronoun references, masculine pronoun forms are employed, as in:

[36] *The employee* must be involved in the planning, the progressing and the evaluation of *his* own training. (Pepper 1992: 12)

[37] *The training officer* then carries out *his* secondary analysis. (Pepper 1992: 21)

In the following example Pepper has in fact two different antecedents, referring to two different referents, but in both cases the masculine is used:

[38] ... *the accountant* does not instruct *the manager* on what *he* must do, although *he* is likely to advise *him* and *his* superiors on what they ought to do. (Pepper 1992: 39)

Tack (1992), similarly to Pepper (1992), has a large number of generic references. Most of them (92.47%) are masculine pronouns:

[39] This is no longer necessary, unless *the interviewer himself* wishes to smoke. (Tack 1992: 11)

[40] On the third page of the application form *the applicant* lists *his* business record. (Tack 1992: 24)

The masculine pronoun is used in all references to *interviewer* and *applicant* (also referred to as *candidate*, *person*), but also to (*chief*) *executive*, *service manager*, *manager*, *managing director*, and *speaker*. It is also used in a coreference with a disjunctive phrase, as in the following example:

[41] *No impresario, producer, or director* would accept an actor or actress, or a ballet dancer, if *he* believed that person was seeking the impossible. (Tack 1992: 6)

One exception to the masculine rule are three examples with indefinite pronouns *everyone*, where Tack uses *they*, as in:

[42] ... *everyone* seems to enjoy the effort to improve the quality, and win a prize for *their* team (Tack 1992: 46)

However, in one example with another indefinite pronoun, *no one*, Tack chooses a different technique; he writes *he* and then adds, *or she*:

- [43] *No one* will strive beyond the call of duty to satisfy customer needs when *he, or she*, feels that management is not caring for its own people. (Tack 1992: 39)

Apart from *they*, there were two occurrences of the dual-gender pronoun:

- [44] When a company is renowned for caring for its customers, you will find that *every member of the staff* happily plays *his/her* part. (Tack 1992: 8)
- [45] For example, when engaging *a telephone receptionist* for a service department, *he or she* might be told something like this: ... (Tack 1992: 9)

In example [45], where *a telephone receptionist* is referred to as *he or she*, the author seems to avoid social stereotyping, according to which telephone receptionists are often women. However, even if the author has made such an attempt, the following example displays a clear case of social stereotyping where a manager, the boss is a man, and a secretary – a woman:

- [46] When *a manager* is upset on receiving a complaint from a customer and hurriedly dictates a 'get-lost' letter, *he* cannot expect *his secretary*, who takes down *his* letter, to look with favour upon a customer-care policy. *She* will undoubtedly spread the news of the way the boss tackles difficult customers, ... (Tack 1992: 40)

Although some authors (e.g. example [54], [81], [97]) do alternate single-gender forms when two antecedents are found side by side, this does not seem to be the technique used by Tack. In the following example there are also two different referents, interviewer and applicant, but both are referred to with the masculine form in the same subject form (although the applicant is later referred to with the masculine in the reflexive case):

- [47] If *the interviewer* is still uncertain after those few minutes have passed, *he* should allow *the applicant* to continue a little longer. *He* will then either talk *himself* out of a job, or persuade the interviewer that *he* is a man worth interviewing in some depth. (Tack 1992: 15)

For a human reader who reads all the above example it is clear that the second occurrence of *he* no longer refers to interviewer because this "he" is to "persuade the interviewer" and therefore this "he" must be the applicant. This example also casts doubt whether Tack's applicant is gender neutral, in the sense that it can be a man or a woman. The fact that the applicant in the above example might be "a man worth interviewing" seems to exclude visualising a woman applicant. Also sudden deviation from the author's usual policy which can be especially seen in examples [43], [44] and [45] might make the reader wonder whether in all other cases the author employed the masculine in the generic or gender-specific sense. Tack's pronoun usage seems to reflect social-stereotyping: managers, directors, executives are often men, staff is male as well as female, while secretaries are usually women.

Weller (1992) is another author in economics who consistently uses masculine pronouns in all examples, not only with male-related antecedents like *farmer*, but also with the more neutral *individual*:

[48] *The farmer* may believe that the futures market is biased, even if it is not, and this may discourage *him* from trading in it. (Weller 1992: 47)

[49] *An individual* who is infinitely risk averse will trade so as to minimize the variability in *his* income... (Weller 1992: 19)

The neutrality of *individual* in example [49] can be debatable, as in the area of speculation and risk reduction, which is discussed by Weller, most "individuals" dealing with contracts, agents, producers, brokers, are usually men.

4.2.2 Law

A. In the domain of law, only two books in my sample display a consistent pronoun policy, Delmas-Marty (1992) and Nerhot (1990), both using exclusively masculine generics. Masculine form is also the preferred form (used in more than 80% of cases) in Bird (1993), Catalano (1991), Moore (1993) and Vincenzi & Marrington (1992). There is only one book, Douzinas et al (1991), which does not contain any examples with masculine generics. The masculine generic prevails over other generic forms not only in the number of authors who use it as their main or only policy, but also in the number of tokens with this form. There are two hundred and fifty two tokens with *he*, three times more than with other forms taken together. As far as other pronoun policies are concerned, the dual-gender pronoun *he/she* (or *she or he*), and the feminine pronoun, *she*, are prevailing forms. It should be stressed, however, that the feminine pronoun is used not only in the gender-neutral sense, but also with stereotypically female antecedents, like *nurse* or *parent with care* (see below the discussion of Bird 1993). Because of a small number of occurrences, the usage of the neuter pronoun *it* and *they* might essentially be disregarded. I have found only two tokens with *it* and one with *they*. Law is the only domain which contains examples with the neuter pronoun *it* as a generic. The detailed statistical analysis of law books can be found in Table 2, p 233.

B. Bird's (1993) preferred generic form seems to be the masculine, which he uses in all examples referring to an *absent parent*, *child support officer*, *Secretary of State*, *inspector*, and *individual* and in most references to a *person* and *child*. Bird's pronoun usage seems to reflect the pronoun usage in The Child Support Act 1991, where the masculine is used in all cases, mentioned above, as the following example will show:

[50] Section 14(2) provides that *the Secretary of State* may make use of any information in *his* possession which was acquired by *him* in

connection with *his* functions under any of the benefit Acts. (Bird 1993: 59)

cf. Section 14(2) from The Child Support Act 1991 (quoted in Bird 1993: 202):

Where *the Secretary of State* has in *his* possession any information acquired by *him* in connection with *his* functions under any of the benefit Acts, *he* may -

- (a) make use of that information for purposes of this Act; or
- (b) disclose it to the Department of Health and Social Services ...

That many examples in Bird might directly correspond to relevant paragraphs in the Act can be illustrated even more clearly in the following example, where the author repeats one of the paragraphs nearly word for word, and follows the same switch of pronoun forms:

[51] Although s15(7) provides that *no person* shall be required under s15 to answer any question or give any evidence tending to incriminate *himself*, or in the case of *a person who is married, his or her* spouse;... (Bird 1993: 69)

cf. s 15 (7) from The Child Support Act 1991 (quoted in Bird 1993: 203)

No person shall be required under this section to answer any question or give any evidence tending to incriminate *himself* or, in the case of *a person who is married, his or her* spouse. (The Child Support Act 1991: 203)

It seems unlikely that, judging from the pronoun forms used, "no person" mentioned in the first part of section 15(7) refers only to men, and that only the "person who is married" can be a man as well as a woman. The switch from the masculine pronoun to a dual-gender pronoun in both cases, can most probably be explained by the fact that *his* spouse is rather unlikely to be used about a husband (a woman and *his* spouse is rather improbable), and the regulation described in section 15(7) was made to encompass both husbands and wives.

The dual-gender pronoun in example [51] is the only occurrence of that form in Bird. Another exception to the masculine generic is the use of the

feminine in all references to a *person/parent with care* (or *caring parent*), as in:

[52] *A person with care* of a qualifying child who decides to apply for an assessment of maintenance will probably do so for one of three reasons. First, *she* may have no choice; ... (Bird 1993: 41)

Bird consistently uses the feminine form in coreference with *person/parent with care* (or *caring parent*), while in all references to an *absent parent* he uses the masculine form, as in:

[53] Secondly, *the absent parent* may be paying nothing or, even if *he* is paying, the person with care may consider the payment to be insufficient. (Bird 1993: 41)

This usage of the masculine and the feminine (in coreference with *absent parent* and *person with care*, respectively) also corresponds to the pronoun reference in The Child Support Act; except in one case - the definition of a person in care:

s 3(3) from The Child Support Act 1991 (quoted in Bird 1993: 195)
A person is a 'person with care', in relation to any child, if *he* is a person - (a) with whom the child has his home (b) who usually provides day to day care for the child...

Even though in this particular definition the masculine pronoun is used in reference to a person with care, the contents of this definition can suggest that the choice for the feminine pronoun in all other examples is governed by the fact that, after divorce, the child is usually left with the mother, and therefore it is the father who is absent. The interpretation of *parent with care* as a mother, and an *absent parent* as a father is underlined in the following quotation from Bird:

There can be no doubt that what is foreseen, and what the section seeks to prevent, is that parents may refuse to say who *the absent parent* (**inevitably the father**) is or where *he* may be found. (Bird 1993: 52)

However, if the absent parent were always a father, one may wonder why the author does not simply say "absent father" or just "father".

Alternating pronoun forms in reference to caring parent and absent parent might also be a convenient means to indicate, through the pronoun forms, which regulation refers to whom, and can be also useful, when two antecedents appear in the immediate context, as the following example will show:

- [54] Critics pointed out that they constitute an unwarranted intrusion into the private life of *the parent with care*. *She* might not know the name of *the absent parent*, if *she* does *she* might be in fear of *him* because of violence. (Bird 1993: 49)

The only pronoun usage in Bird (1993) which does not find its counterpart in The Child Support Act is the use of the neuter pronoun *it* in two references to a child. Neuter pronoun used in coreference with *child* is a sanctioned usage, but Bird does not use this form consistently in all references to a child; he uses the masculine as well:

- [55] These two sets of figures have therefore come to be used as the margins between which an order may be calculated whenever it has been necessary to consider *a child's* maintenance in isolation from that of *its* custodial parent. (Bird 1993: 6)

cf.

- [56] Any individual may apply to the court to be appointed guardian of a child if either *that child* has no parent with parental responsibility for *him* or a residence order has been made in favour of a parent or guardian who has died. (Bird 1993: 10)

In Blackburn (1993) three different pronoun forms are used as generics: the masculine, the feminine and a dual-gender pronoun. The chapters written by Blackburn himself are more consistent – *he or she* is used in all but three examples. One of the examples is a feminine pronoun used in coreference with *practitioner* and the other two are the masculine referring to antecedents previously used with the dual-gender pronoun. In

the discussion of citizen's right to vote, Blackburn first chooses *he or she* as a generic, but in a later reference, on the next page, he switches to the masculine form:

[57] This statute provides that *any person* may vote at a parliamentary election so long as *he or she* is 18 years old or over on the date of the poll, was resident in the constituency where *he or she* wishes to vote on a specified date... (Blackburn 1993: 76)

cf.

[58] ... *a citizen's* right to vote should be founded upon the date which *he* files *his* claim in a particular constituency, ... (Blackburn 1993: 77)

Also a Member of Parliament is usually used with a dual-gender pronoun, but in one case, *he or she* is used side by side with the masculine:

[59] First-past-the-post voting means that if the candidate for party A gets 10,833 votes, the candidate for party B 13, 255, the candidate for party C 14, 883, the candidate for party D 3108 and others 851, *the candidate for Party C* is returned as Member of Parliament. This is so despite *his* percentage support among voters, being only 33.7 per cent, and the fact that 66.3 per cent of the local electorate – two out of every three local citizens – voted against *him or her*. (Blackburn 1993: 92)

Blackburn explains that the results he quotes come from the election in Conwy in 1992, which was won by Sir Wyn Roberts. Thus this example is both generic and specific. It generalises about who can become the Member of Parliament on the basis of a specific real case. The pronoun switch, especially that the referent remains the same, underlines the double, generic as well as specific, character of this example; *he* might at first be interpreted as a specific reference to Sir Wyn Roberts, but the use of *he or she* suggests that this example must be treated as a generic reference to any candidate for a Parliament, male as well as female.

One chapter checked in Blackburn (1993) was not written by Blackburn, but by another author, whose uses a different pronoun policy. This chapter

has only two occurrences of the dual-gender pronoun and the author seems to prefer to alternate between the masculine and the feminine forms.

Thus the patient is either a *he* or a *she*:

[60] But what if the unit is closed on the night *the patient* suffers *his* coronary? (Blackburn 1993: 64)

[61] The older *the patient* the more, and more expensive, medical care *she* needs. (Blackburn 1993: 58)

Alternating pronouns in the two above examples may not necessarily be a nonsexist technique only; the choice of pronouns reflects the fact that in reality many more men than women are likely to have a coronary and that most geriatric patients are women. A similar varying pronoun usage is employed in references about doctors, where, not surprisingly, the surgeon is a "he", while a clinician is referred to as *she*. Taking this observation into account, one may only wonder about the reasons for the difference in pronominal references to Health Minister:

[62] Section 3(1) elaborates on *the Minister's* responsibilities. *She* is obliged to meet all reasonable requirements... (Blackburn 1993: 59)

[63] If *a Minister* had in effect acted not to promote but to frustrate the underlying policy of the 1977 Act, then the courts might call *him* on account. (Blackburn 1993: 60)

Could the fact that at the time the book was published Secretary of Health was a woman, Mrs Virginia Bottomley, explain the usage of the feminine form in the example above? However, the Minister's responsibilities discussed in the book must be taken as responsibilities of any Minister of Health, and thus the interpretation of the Minister and its pronoun anaphor should be generic and not specific.

The generic usage in Burton (1992) displays a variety of pronoun forms, which can be illustrated by following examples about a judge, where single-gender forms as well as a dual-gender pronoun are used:

[64] *A judge* may give a proper justification for a decision though motivated to reach *her* result by improper reasoning. (Burton 1992: 45, note 18)

[65] It takes only a bit of cynicism then to regard all adjudication as dependent on *the judge's* politics in the sense of *his* personal ideology and partisan loyalties. (Burton 1992: 13)

[66] What does *a judge's* legal duty require when *he or she* has discretion? (Burton 1992: 43)

A variation in Burton's generic pronoun usage can also be seen in the following example where two different pronoun forms are used with the same antecedent:

[67] *Each* probably thinks that *his or her* own question is the most important, and *they* may well disagree about that. (Burton 1992: xiv)

Alternating *he/she* and *they* in reference to the same antecedent is quite common among different authors, although it is usually *he/she* which is used in subject position and *they*, which is used in other forms (e.g. Abbott 1984; Lind 1988 and Meyers 1989 list several instances of such alternation; I have also found a few instances of such alternation in my corpus: e.g. example [18], [198], or [199]).

In some cases the usage of a single-gender pronoun, masculine or feminine, might suggest that the author thinks of one person, as in the following example where an author explains how different people might behave in the same circumstances and quotes among others:

[68] *Another lawyer* in the same circumstances, who has devoted a large part of *his* life to enhancing professional ethics in the interest of professional ethics, [...] might probably refuse to put the perjuring client on the stand. (Burton 1992: 33, note 62)

A similar interpretation of a single-gender pronoun form is also plausible in another example where the reference is made to a person called Smith. With proper names the reference is less abstract than with hypothetical

person; being given a name we try to visualise a person either as a man or as a woman. Burton decides to make "his Smith" a woman:

- [69] That Jones is outraged at *Smith* for working as an analyst for the CIA and believes *she* should resign *her* job is not normally a reason for Smith to resign. (Burton 1992: 40)

One more example worth quoting comes from the preface where Burton writes what he thinks is important for an author and uses the masculine form as an anaphor. In this example Burton's use of the masculine might suggest that talking about an author, he was in fact thinking of himself:

- [70] It is important, in my view, for *an author* to make the nature of *his* projects clear at the outset. (Burton 1992: xiv)

It should be pointed out that Burton is aware that some people are concerned about sexist language; in one of the cases he discusses an instance of sexist language as used in the following statement "Any person should be sober when he drives a car". Burton realises that such a statement may be offensive to some women, but he feels that the message is often more important than the choice of pronouns. In his opinion the message clearly refers to both men and women and "a motorist in most circumstances would better attend to the relationship between sobriety and driving than to the gender of the pronouns in the warning" (Burton 1992: 25-26; see also full quotation in Appendix 1, p 214).

Catalano's (1991) usage of pronoun is quite consistent, though it might be seen as reflecting social stereotyping. His *nurse* is always a *she*, while other antecedents, *patient*, *person*, *plaintiff*, or *attorney* are referred to with masculine pronouns:

- [71] *The patient* must demonstrate that *he* understands the information... (Catalano 1991: 19)

- [72] *Each* attorney summarizes *his* case for the jury. (Catalano 1991: 51)

- [73] *A practising nurse* will probably encounter a chemically impaired worker sometime during *her* career... (Catalano 1991: 31)

It is interesting to note that although the author's pronoun usage might appear sexist, the phrase "a chemically impaired worker" used in the last example seems to bear traces of the Political Correctness, where "chemically impaired" is used to mean somebody who abuses alcohol or drugs.

Coleman (1992) uses the masculine, the feminine and the dual-gender pronoun in almost equal proportion. In the following two examples Coleman uses different pronoun forms as generics, although both examples discuss a rational person:

- [74] When pursuing a noncooperative strategy *a rational agent* seeks to maximize *her* utility (Coleman 1992: 18)

- [75] ... *each rational individual* would agree to comply with the norms of a political morality only if ex ante each perceived compliance to be at least in *his or her* interest. (Coleman 1992: 20-21)

It is worth noting that in example [74] the rational agent is an exemplification of all rational agents, while the quantifier "each" in example [75] suggests plurality. Antecedents with the quantifier "each" (noun phrases with *each*, like *each individual*, *each party*, *each agent* or "each" used as a pronoun) are usually coreferring with dual-gender pronoun in Coleman. However, this rule does not seem to apply in the following example:

- [76] We might view *each player's* interest in contracting as consisting in maximizing *her* share of the benefits and minimizing *her* share of the burdens. (Coleman 1992: 32)

The use of the single-gender pronoun *she* is difficult to explain. The context makes it clear that the reference is made to more than one person.

Moreover, the context seems to be exactly the same as in the following example:

[77] That common interest aside, *each party* seeks to maximise *his or her* relative share of the gains. (Coleman 1992: 31)

Whereas in most cases antecedents with the quantifier "each" refer to hypothetical referents, there is one instance where it denotes a specific group of people: Coleman's colleagues and friends (probably both female and male) whom he thanks for help in drafting his book:

[78] *Each* in *his or her* own way has made it possible for me to undertake and complete this project (twice). (Coleman 1992: xvii)

As quoted in the example above, Coleman had to write his book twice, because his first manuscript has been stolen by somebody. Coleman comments on it as follows:

[79] My immediate thought was that the book was so good that *some potential author* could not resist the temptation to steal it and publish it under *his* own name. My next thought was that *someone* was so anxious to read it that *he* could not await its publication. (Coleman 1992: xvi)

The person who stole the manuscript remains unknown and undiscovered; therefore the masculine pronoun does not indicate that it was necessarily a man. The author might have used a single-gender pronoun because he probably thought that it was one person who took the manuscript. The choice for the masculine (and not feminine) may, however, reveal Coleman's suspicion about the thief's sex, or can be partly due to stereotyped image of criminals as men.

The following example with the masculine used in coreference with *everybody*, seems much easier to interpret. In his Acknowledgements, Coleman devotes words of gratitude to his former teacher and says:

[80] *Everyone* should have the opportunity to discuss *his* work with someone like Joseph Raz. (Coleman 1992: xiv)

Coleman says that he was very lucky to have a good supervisor, and he thinks that it would be good if all people (most probably he means researchers) were as lucky as he was. Thus, by *everybody* the author means "all people" but at the same time he identifies *everybody* with himself.

There are several other cases where Coleman uses single-gender pronouns. In one example, the author uses both forms; individuals A and B are introduced to explain a graph and individual A is a "she", while individual B is a "he":

[81] In order to be rational, cooperation must move everyone (in this case, A and B) from s toward and ultimately to some point on the Pareto frontier [...] All states of the world represented by points between a and t make *B* worse off than *he* is at s, and all points below and to the right of y, for example z, make *A* worse off than *she* is at s. (Coleman 1992: 24)

Alternating between the masculine and feminine can point more clearly to two different hypothetical possibilities discussed on the basis of the graph.

In another example Coleman switches from the masculine to the feminine in coreference with the same antecedent, *injurer*, although presenting possible injurers, Coleman quotes *Jones* who 'drives *his* car negligently into Smith's house' (p.74) and *sea captain* who 'moors *his* ship to the dock' (p.74) Thus, in both cases masculine forms are used; but in generalisation about injurers the author first uses the masculine and in the very next sentence, he suddenly switches to the feminine:

[82] On the other hand, neither is *the injurer* free to act without responsibility for the harm *his* conduct occasions. Instead, we might say that in each case, *the injurer* is free to act provided *she* pays a certain fee for doing so. (Coleman 1992: 74)

Moreover, the explanation that follows, reveals another switch:

- [83] That would mean that whenever *someone* contemplated taking *her* car out for a spin, *she* would first have to secure the consent of each person *she* might put at a risk. (Coleman 1992: 74)

Presenting possible injurers, the author mentions a driver Jones with a masculine pronoun reference; here a driver is referred to with a feminine pronoun, even though it still seems to illustrate the same situation.

Delmas-Marty (1992) consistently uses the masculine in all examples:

- [84] ... by going into public life *a politician* makes *himself* a target for criticism and, above all, accepts the idea that what *he* says and does will be subject to public scrutiny. (Delmas-Marty 1992: 67)
- [85] The medium, as a criterion employed in case law for assessing the extent of the duties and responsibilities to which *any person* exercising *his* freedom of speech is subject, is especially important in the light of the last sentence of Article 10.1. (Delmas-Marty 1992: 60)

The author's choice of the masculine may be a generic technique, but at the same time the masculine corresponds to the sex of specific people, whose cases she analyses. Thus, although the statement in example [84] is a generalisation applying to all politicians, the politician mentioned in the illustrative case was a man. In example [85] a particular case and sentence is meant, but it can apply to 'any [other] person'.

Because British law is based on particular cases it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between generic and specific references:

- [86] The Court of Human Rights disapproved the legal enactment whereby *a journalist* who expresses a value-judgement can be found guilty solely because the only defence available to *him* - proving the truth of the allegations made - is by definition precluded in this case. (Delmas-Marty 1992: 73)
- [87] The right to a fair trial can be jeopardized by what has come to be known as 'trial by the media'. Here again, it seems that such a complaint has never been found admissible, either because *the*

applicant failed to prove *his* allegations⁸³ or because *he* failed to exhaust domestic remedies⁸⁴. (Delmas-Marty 1992: 77)

Example [86] refers to a decision of the court based on one particular case, where the journalist was a man, but this decision can be invoked in other similar cases in the future, where the journalist may also be a woman.

Example 87 is a similar type, as again the explanation of why a certain right has not been exercised, is based on two particular cases (numbered here as 83 and 84, which refer to particular applications). Therefore in reality, there might have been many different applicants, but the author's statement looks as if there was only one generic referent. This seems to be emphasised by syntax; the two masculine references are co-ordinated by "or" and corefer with the same antecedent.

There are only three examples of generic in Douzinas et al (1991), which might suggest that the authors try to avoid using singular generic pronoun references. In all the three generic examples the dual-gender pronoun, *he or she*, and *she or he* is employed. I will quote one example where the generic is a relatively rarely used reflexive form, abbreviated here to *him or herself* (other authors prefer to use the full form *himself or herself* - see e.g. example [32] and [97]):

[88] Even more, as subjectivity is constructed in language, *no person* is ever fully present to *him or herself*. (Douzinas et al 1991: 47)

Moore (1993) uses the masculine form in most examples, even when there are other antecedents in the immediate context:

[89] ... where *someone* by positive act undertakes to rescue another, when *he* abandons the enterprise, we hold *him* liable for *his* earlier act, not *his* subsequent omission. For if *he* hadn't thrown the rope, someone else would have thrown the rope or the *swimmer himself* would have made greater efforts. (Moore 1993: 33)

The four exceptions to the masculine are examples with the feminine form. It is difficult to see any reason underlying the choice for a feminine

pronoun. It may just be a stylistic innovation. Moore discusses for instance whether a case of unplugging life support machines from a terminally ill patient 'with her consent', thus causing death of such patient is killing and explains that:

[90] ... the disconnection of various devices is held not to be an action because such disconnections do not more than return *the patient* to the condition *she* would have been in had the treatment not been undertaken (Moore 1993: 26)

But later, discussing a variation of the same case, Moore changes the single-gender form to the masculine form:

[91] ... then why is not the intruder who unplugs the patient from the respirator, with the intention and the effect that the patient dies, only returning *the patient* to *his* baseline and, thus, only omitting to save *him*? (Moore 1993: 27)

In Nerhot (1990), the chapters checked have been written by different authors, but the pronoun policy they have is the same - masculine pronoun is employed in all cases, as can be illustrated by the following two examples referring to a *witness*:

[92] It has been said that the British system of cross-examination does force *the witness* to reduce *his* evidence to matters of greater detail. (Nerhot 1990: 16)

[93] A judge or jury decides whether *the witness* is telling the truth by observing *his* demeanour in the witness box. The flickering of *his* eyelids or the beads of perspiration on *his* forehead may indicate that *he* is not telling the truth. (Nerhot 1990: 12)

Whereas example [92] is a generalisation about any witnesses, example [93] presents one exemplary situation, where the jury observes the behaviour of one particular witness. Thus, example [93] is likely to make the reader visualise one person.

Vincenzi & Marrington (1992) writing on the immigration law often follow the pronoun usage employed in the original Immigration Law, where in most cases the masculine form is applied:

[94] The general rule is that *a person* travelling from one part of the common travel area to another is examined in that part of the area in which *he* first arrives from outside the common travel area. (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 25)

cf. the text of the law:

A passenger arriving in the U.K. is to be refused leave to enter if there is reason to believe that *he* intends to enter any other parts of the common travel area and *he* is not acceptable to the immigration authorities there. (immigration rule quoted in Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 25)

In a few examples the Immigration Law employs the dual-gender pronoun instead of the usual masculine, and this variation of generic use is also adopted by the authors in their analysis:

[95] ... the residence permit is not essential to enable such *an individual* to remain. *He or she* can only be fined if one is not obtained. (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 213)

cf. Article 6: *An applicant* for a residence permit or right to abode shall not be required by a Member State to produce anything other than the following, namely: (a) the identity card or passport with which *he or she* entered the territory; (b) proof that *he or she* comes within one of the classes of persons referred to in Articles 1 and 4. Immigration Law, quoted in Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 212)

However, sometimes the authors do not strictly follow the pronoun policy in the Immigration Law, but introduce other forms side by side. Note 148 in the law (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 214) uses only the masculine form in reference to a person applying for a residence permit, while in the interpretation of the note Vincenzi & Marrington use *he* as well as *he or she*.

[96] It would seem that, if, having shown that *he* had a good chance of getting a job after expire of the six-month period and having then secured a job, *the worker* could not be refused a permit

because *he or she* had not obtained a job before the six-month period expired. (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 214)

There is one case where Vincenzi & Marrington use a version of a dual-gender pronoun: *herself (himself)*, where the reference is made to a disjunction - 'mother (or father)' and the pronoun form corresponds to the sex and form of the antecedents:

[97] ... *a person* born outside the U.K.... is a British citizen by descent if at any time of *his* birth *his mother* (or *father* if legitimate) was *herself (himself)* British citizen by descent... (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 13)

It was necessary to employ both single-gender forms, as the two antecedents were of opposite sex. Moreover, both *mother* and *father* are gender-specific terms: *mother* is feminine, whereas *father* is masculine.

4.2.3 Linguistics

A. Among the linguistics books checked only three display a consistent pronoun usage: Thomas (1991) uses only masculine generics, Milroy & Milroy (1991) also have the masculine in all but one case, while Baker (1992) prefers the dual-gender pronoun - *s/he* in subject position and *he or she* forms in other cases (possessive and object forms). The remaining authors have a varied pronoun usage, alternating between the masculine, the dual-gender pronoun and the plural form *they* and all except Baker (1992), Cameron et al. (1992) and Fowler (1991), have at least a few examples with the masculine pronoun. The masculine, constitutes a third of all generic tokens. Dual-gender pronoun seems to be most popular - especially forms like *he or she* and *s/he*; it is employed in more than 50% of generic references by four authors. Linguistics books have the biggest number of examples with *s/he*, despite the fact that this form is most strongly criticised. However, only in one book, the above mentioned Baker

(1992), is this form used in all pronoun references in the subject case. The feminine is employed as a main generic policy by Cameron et al. (1992), which is not surprising as Cameron, who is one of the editors, is known for using this form in her previous books (see Cameron 1992). Three other authors, Bagnall (1993), Baker (1992) and Fasold (1990) include a note on problems with generic forms, but only one author, Blakemore (1992) explains her pronoun policy in the preface. Statistical information about the linguistics sample can be found in Table 3, p 234.

B. Bagnall (1993) uses four different generic forms: masculine, feminine, dual-gender pronoun and *they*. It is difficult to see any clear rule for using any given form. The author is aware of the generic problem and includes a note that the masculine form should be avoided, and a preferable form to be used is *they* (see Appendix 1, p 216 for full quotation). Bagnall himself, however, uses as many examples with *he* as with *they* (see Table 3, p 234). In most cases, *they* is used in coreference with indefinite pronouns, *anyone*, *everyone*, *someone*, although there is also one example with the indefinite pronoun referred to as *he*:

[98] If you read that *someone* "rejects talking shops in favour of grassroots monitoring" you can guess without being told that *they* work in one of the caring professions... (Bagnall 1992: 15)

[99] For example, you would have to be a very pompous journalist before you could write that " *someone* was making every endeavour to locate a document" ... You write, as you would say, " *He* is doing *his* best to find it". (Bagnall 1993: 1)

In both cases *someone* may be treated as exemplification - a reference to one particular individual, who writes particular words. But in another exemplification, referring to *neighbour*, Bagnall uses the plural form:

[100] You had to imagine that *your neighbour* at a dinner party had turned to you during the soup course and said "Just what is that story you're on about?" and you had to finish your answer before *they* took the next mouthful. (Bagnall 1993: 51)

Another example contains two different generic forms used in the same sentence in coreference with the same antecedent:

- [101] Some journalists can practise on *the news editor*, the trick being to finish telling *him or her* the nub of your story before *his* eyes have strayed back to *his* screen, or the papers on *his* desk. (Bagnall 1993: 51)

One use of the feminine generic may actually be regarded as a reflection of social stereotyping:

- [102] So *a parent* whose child is ill writes to the school secretary: [...] . What *she* should have done, of course, was to forget the important words and use the ones which had come into *her* head in the first place: [...] (Bagnall 1993: 7)

A neutral *parent* referred to as *she*, seems to underline the fact that a person who usually is most concerned about the child's school affairs is a mother.

Baker (1992), in contrast to Bagnall, has a very consistent pronoun usage. She is also aware of the generic problem and mentions that in academic writing forms like *s/he*, *he or she*, and *him or her* usually replace the masculine (see also a full note in Appendix 1, p 216). The forms she lists are actually forms Baker herself uses: *s/he* in subject position and the other two forms in the possessive and object forms:

- [103] ... one cannot deny that *a reader's* cultural and intellectual background determine how much sense *s/he* gets out of the text. (Baker 1992: 222)

- [104] Illocutionary meaning has to do with *the speaker's* intentions rather than *his/her* actual words. (Baker 1992: 259)

- [105] If *someone* is assisting you to mend a car and you ask for four screws, you do not expect *him/her* to hand you two or six. (Baker 1992: 233)

Example [105] above shows that Baker uses dual-gender pronoun also with indefinite pronouns, which are often found with plural form. She also uses

the dual-gender pronoun when she refers to one person, and not a generic representative of all class. For instance she discusses a case where somebody says: "I went to the cinema. The beer was good." and makes a following comment:

[106] ... *the speaker* says that *s/he* went to the cinema, that *s/he* drank beer at the cinema, and that the beer in question was good. (Baker 1992: 223)

Baker also uses this form in reference when she discusses a real life case of particular translation technique used by a translator of a shampoo advertisement:

[107] *The translator* could have used the feminine form of the verb, but *s/he* possibly felt that it would also have been marked or that it might have unnecessarily excluded potential male users. (Baker 1992: 94)

It is difficult to assess whether the use of *s/he* in the above example is only the result of Baker's consistent usage or, whether it also means that Baker did not know who translated this particular advertising leaflet.

Blakemore (1992) explains in the preface that she is going to use the masculine about the *speaker/writer* and the feminine about *hearer/reader* (see Appendix 1, p 216 for full quotation). Blakemore's policy means, however, that the reader must analyse in all cases whether a given example refers to a *speaker* or *hearer*, especially that these are not the only antecedents used by the author. In some cases the interpretation seems easy; *a communicator, writer or lecturer* or *someone who wants to communicate something* are clear cases of a *speaker/writer*.

[108] Why does *someone* who wants to communicate something bother making it known to the audience that *he* has this intention? (Blakemore 1992: 34)

However, in the following example about a semanticist, the reader may wonder whether a semanticist should be interpreted as *hearer/reader*, because of the feminine pronoun used:

[109] ... if *the semanticist* is to say what role these expressions and constructions play, then *she* cannot afford to overlook the role of non-linguistic knowledge in utterance interpretation and the principles which constrains its use. (Blakemore 1992: 46-47)

In another reference to *someone*, Blakemore chooses a different pronoun form, the plural, (which is not even mentioned in her pronoun policy note), which might indicate that this case does not refer to a *speaker/writer*, even though this *someone* might also be regarded as a person who communicates something, in this case, makes a promise:

[110] ... you know that if *someone* makes a promise, *they* are morally obliged to keep it. (Blakemore 1992: 49)

It seems therefore, that Blakemore treats indefinite pronouns differently than other antecedents, as she adopts the form commonly used in coreference with indefinite pronouns. However, there is also an example where this form is not used with indefinite pronoun, but in coreference with "no viewer". Blakemore discusses the difference between utterance meaning and sentence, using as an example the advice given by a certain TV presenter to people travelling in the Greek islands. What the presenter said was as a matter of fact, a slip of the tongue: "Obviously, in the outer islands nobody speaks English. So brush up your English". Blakemore comments on the possible interpretation of the presenter's words stating that:

[111] *No viewer* would have taken the presenter to be recommending that *they* improve *their* English for a holiday in Greece: ... (Blakemore 1992: 5)

It is possible that by saying "no viewer" she actually meant plural - "not even one from many viewers watching this particular programme", and

hence the plural form. It is worth pointing out that discussing the same case further Blakemore uses a feminine form:

- [112] Why would *a viewer* interpret this as an injunction to improve *her* Greek? (Blakemore 1992: 11)

In Cameron et al (1992) two generic forms are employed: the feminine and the plural form *they*. Both forms, *she* and *they*, seem to be complementary to each other in Chapter 1, which is the Introduction. Basically, the feminine is used as a generic in all references except indefinite pronouns which are used with *they*:

- [113] Can *the researcher* situate *herself* within the conceptual framework of the researched and thereby understand what is going on? (Cameron et al 1992: 11)
- [114] And there are also arguments about whether one can say power is being exercised over *someone* even if *they* put up no resistance. (Cameron et al 1992: 18)

Chapter 2 uses only the plural, though antecedents are not indefinite pronouns:

- [115] *A person's* language can show what groups *they* are connected with. (Cameron et al 1992: 39)

Because of this clear difference in the pronoun usage between the two chapters, one can suspect that the first one was written by Cameron, who usually employs this form as a "visibility technique".

Fasold (1990) is another linguist who writes about language and sex in his book. The form which he employs most often (74.42%) is the dual-gender pronoun:

- [116] ... *the older or more highly-ranked person* is privileged to decide how *he or she* will be addressed. (Fasold 1990: 14)
- [117] Pattern 4 speakers would not address *a priest or nun* by *his or her* first name, even a 'casual friend', unless the priest or nun were of the same sex. (Fasold 1990: 28)

While the dual-gender pronoun in example [116] refers to a generic person, its use is not entirely the same in example [117], because of the nature of the noun phrase it refers to. The referents in this example are priest or nun, male and female respectively, hence the use of both masculine and feminine pronoun.

Fasold uses other generic forms as well, but he does not, however, seem to have a rule, which governs the choice of a particular form. The other two forms, masculine and *they*, are used in the same contexts as the dual-gender pronoun, sometimes even alongside *he or she* in coreference with the same antecedent, as can be illustrated with a following example:

- [118] For example – faculty member (F) who wants to address the dean (*D*) would recognize *him or her* as an adult, then check to see if it was 'a status marked setting' [...]. Next, F decides if *D* is a friend or colleague [...], then if F has a 'dispensation' to address *D* by *his* first name. 'Dispensation' simply means that *D* has made it clear, explicitly or tacitly, that it is acceptable for F to call *him or her* by *D's* first name. As a result, F addresses *him* as 'Dean' + LN in the absence of dispensation. (Fasold 1990: 12, 14)

In this example, the reference is made to one and the same person, the Dean, in one particular situation, showing what factors may be taken into account before somebody decides to address another person (here: the Dean) in a particular way. The pronoun referring to the Dean changes from the sex-neutral *he or she*, to *he*, again to *he or she* and again to *he*, as if the author was tired of repeating *he or she* several times, or simply forgot to change all the forms. Such pronoun switch might reflect the authors lack of decision concerning not only pronoun forms, but also as to whether the Dean was generic, abstract person or an exemplification. In most exemplification cases, mostly descriptions of a speaker who starts using a particular form, Fasold uses the masculine pronoun. In one case the choice of that pronoun reflects a real case example, where a male white police officer refers to a male black doctor as "boy":

- [119] ... by his manipulation of the address form system, the officer was able to show that as far as he was concerned, *no black person* could possibly be treated any more deferentially than a small child, even if *he* were an adult member of a respected profession. (Fasold 1990: 22-3)

The masculine refers to any generic "black person", who might be male or female, but most probably, the choice of a masculine pronoun was dictated by the real situation described in Fasold, where the black doctor in question was a man.

The plural form *they* is used with indefinite pronouns as well as with other antecedents, in both subject and other forms, that is in all cases where the dual-gender pronoun is also employed, e.g.:

- [120] Another related phenomenon is how *a person* is referred to as well as how *he or she* is addressed. (Fasold 1990: 3)

- [121] When there is a power differential, and *the person* with the greater power has an occupational title, *they* can be addressed by that title along with *their* surname. (Fasold 1990: 32)

Fowler (1991) uses only sex-neutral forms: *he or she*, *s/he* and *they*. He treats these forms possibly as stylistic variations, as can be seen in the following three examples, where the pronoun in the subject position is used in coreference with generic antecedents:

- [122] *The journalist* takes a different view. *He or she* collects facts, reports them objectively, and the newspaper present them fairly and without bias,... (Fowler 1991: 1)

- [123] *An ordinary person*, by contrast, could hardly expect to be heeded, if *they* were to try to call a press conference. (Fowler 1991: 22)

- [124] In understanding a painting *s/he* has never seen before, for example, *a viewer* brings to bear a prior knowledge of compositional codes... (Fowler 1991:43)

Hodge & Kress (1993) explain in the preface that the second edition of their book is almost unchanged except for the last chapter (Chapter 9) so I have decided to check the first and the last chapter and compare the

pronoun usage. Chapter 1 has only two examples of generics: one with the masculine and one with the double pronoun forms. These two forms are also used, in a greater number in the last chapter, except one example with the plural form in coreference with indefinite pronoun:

- [125] *Everyone* has to be some kind of linguist with theories about *their* own language and that of others. (Hodge & Kress 1993: 193)

The following example seems to be a specific reference to a person, whose words are analysed, and the use of *he/she* might suggest that it was an anonymous author, or at least, that Hodge & Kress did not know whether it was a he or a she:

- [127] *The person* who actually wrote down the words that we had before us is not obviously the most important link in the construction and transmission of this text, though it is *he/she* who is accorded the status of "writer". (Hodge & Kress 1993: 192)

Holmes (1992) uses a variety of forms without any regularity. Different pronoun forms are used in subject position: *he*, *s/he*, *they*, in possible exemplification and generalisations. Examples with the plural constitute half of all the generics. This form is used in reference to one particular person or a generic person. Only in one case the antecedent is an indefinite pronoun, although the only other case with an indefinite pronoun appears with a feminine form, cf. the two following examples:

- [128] **They [= people in Haiti]** ignore the existence of Haitian Creole, which in fact *everyone* uses at home and with friends for all *their* everyday interactions. (Holmes 1992:38)
- [129] Exactly the same kind of switching occurs in Belgium when *a government clerk* deals with a query from someone *she* went to school with. (Holmes 1992: 43)

Example [128] is clearly notionally plural, as *everybody* refers to all people in Haiti. However, it is not clear whether it is also grammatically plural: its antecedent can be indefinite pronoun *everybody* (which is

grammatically singular – as the verb form used in agreement indicates) or "people in Haiti" (which is a plural noun phrase). In contrast, example [129], refers to one person, hence probably the use of a single-gender pronoun. A following example shows how the author avoids ambiguity which might result from having side by side several pronouns, referring to two different antecedents, so that the reader can see which pronoun forms refer to which antecedents:

[130] Which varieties *Kalda* will use to greet a stranger from a different tribe whom *he* met in the street? Answer: [...] c) This would depend on *his* assessment of what languages the stranger knew. *He* would probably use Kingwana if *he* guessed the *person* lived in Bukavu, but standard Swahili if *he* thought *they* came out of town. (Holmes 1992: 23)

In the example above Holmes uses *he* in reference to *Kalda* (a member of a tribe in Africa), and *they* in reference to a person that *Kalda* meets.

One more example from Holmes, about a secretary, is worth quoting because it breaks with the typical stereotyped feminine form usually used in reference to secretaries:

[131] *The secretary* might be indirectly (and therefore politely) asking if *s/he* might leave since *s/he* has finished a particular task. (Holmes 1992: 23)

Milroy & Milroy (1991) have the masculine as a generic policy and employ this form in coreference with *user of language*, *child*, *interviewer*, *scientist*, *player* and *tester*, e.g.:

[132] Thus, if *a child* is shown a picture of a horse jumping over a fence and asked what the horse is doing, *he* may be penalised for replying: Jumping over a fence. (Milroy & Milroy 1991: 4)

Because of the consistent usage of the masculine forms, the occurrence of a dual-gender pronoun is worth quoting, especially that it is used side by

side with a masculine form and both pronoun forms refer to the same antecedent:

- [133] A *person* who speaks English perfectly effectively, but who has occasional usages that are said to be 'substandard' ... may well find that *his/her* social mobility is blocked and may, for example, be refused access to certain types of employment without any official admission that the refusals depend partly or wholly on *his* use of language. (Milroy & Milroy 1991: 2)

Thomas (1991) uses the masculine form as a generic form in all his examples, almost all of which referring to a purist, to quote one where he gives a definition of a purist:

- [134] To sum up: a *purist* is, on *his* own admission, one who maintains a dualistic view of language as containing desirable and undesirable elements, who feels able to recognise these elements in a given language and who [...] seeks to remove those elements *he* deems undesirable. (Thomas 1991: 24)

4.2.4 Medicine

A. Among medical books three have one pronoun form employed consistently in all generic cases: Modell & Modell (1992) use *they*, Jacobsen (1992) uses *he*, and Young (1991) uses *he or she*. Two other authors use one generic form, the masculine, in more than 80% of their generic references - Illingworth (1991), and Morton & Phillips (1992). The masculine is a popular form among medical authors and is used as a generic policy more often than the dual-gender pronoun and the plural taken together. The feminine form has its highest occurrence as a generic among all domains checked. This is not surprising taking into account the fact, that half of the examples with the feminine refer to a *nurse*, which traditionally has been used with the feminine form. Chadwick & Tadd (1992) explain in the preface that they will use the masculine in all cases except in references to the *nurse*, where they will use the feminine form. Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones (1992) use the feminine in reference to people who have eating

disorders, because, as they explain, it is usually women rather than man who suffer from such problems. The high percentage of feminine forms in medical books is therefore mostly the result of the specificity of the domain, where women are often more visible as patients and especially as nurses. If we regard as a sexist usage both the masculine and the feminine used in reference to the nurse we can discover that seven books use sexist structures in more than 60% of their generic references. Full statistical data can be found in Table 4, p 235.

B. Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones (1992) decide to use the feminine form in their book, as their experience shows that most of their patients are women. Their pronoun usage, therefore is to reflect generalised but in a way real life cases. Although the use of the feminine form is often listed among sex-neutral technique, the authors probably do not treat it as really neutral if explaining their pronoun usage, they feel obliged to add that this usage does not reflect any sexist bias on their part (see Appendix 1, p 218 for full quotation). Probably to avoid accusations of being sexist the authors decide to use other forms as well and they begin their book with two instances of the dual-gender pronoun, and later on also make use of *they*.

[135] A *person* can be diagnosed as having bulimia nervosa if *she or he* [...] has a feeling of lack of control over *her or his* eating behaviour during the binges;... (Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones 1992: 22)

[136] The treatment of obesity therefore involves *the person* in changing *her* eating habits. (Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones 1992: 26)

[137] A *person* does not 'recover' from anorexia nervosa just because *they* have reached a normal, healthy weight. (Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones 1992: 38)

Benjamin & Curtis (1992) use three different pronoun forms as generics: and vary them even in coreference with a similar antecedent, like *person*:

[138] Thus, suppose that *a person* is playing checkers. At various points in the game *she* may ask *herself*, What should I do? (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 10)

[139] Finally, duty-based frameworks make the relationship between *a person's* actions and *his* character very clear. (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 37)

[140] ... one person's falsely promising *another* to undertake long-term commitments solely to manipulate *his or her* consent to sexual relations. (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 45)

On the other hand, such antecedents like, *nurse* (also referred to as *intuitionist*) or *physician*, are always referred to with the same pronoun form - *nurse* as *she*, and *physician* as *he or she*:

[141] *The reflective nurse* cannot put *her* moral course on "automatic pilot". (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 11)

[142] They [= decisions] will often turn on questions of value, and, as noted above, *the physician's* technical expertise does not make *him or her* an expert on conflicts of value. (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 14)

It should be noted, that the authors discuss ethical problems facing nurses on the basis of real life examples where nurses were women. Therefore the choice of *she* in coreference with a *nurse* may not necessarily be the reflection of social stereotyping, but the reflection of the authors' experience.

In generic statements about patients, the authors use *he or she*, but when they give an example of one particular patient, like Jehovah's Witness, the authors use a single-gender pronoun:

[143] Thus it is the way *a patient* decides to exercise *his or her* right in health care that will, in particular cases, determine the specific content of the corresponding duties of doctors and nurses. (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 34)

[144] Consider, for example, *a mentally competent, adult, lifelong Jehovah's Witness*, who refuses a life saving blood transfusion. With the transfusion *he* will be able to lead a comparatively healthy normal life, without it *he* will die. (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 9)

There is one instance of an indefinite noun as antecedent:

[145] Ethical autonomy involves being one's own person when one decides upon or judges conduct. To the extent that *someone* is not *her* own person, *her* will become the instrument of another or *she* may be a "cog" in the machine. (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 21-22)

Although the authors seem to generalise here the case of patient's autonomy, introducing the problem, a few sentences before, they discuss three imaginary women: "Thus, for example, Ann can be regarded as more autonomous than Bea, but less so than Celia [...]" Thus *she* refers to *someone*, but this *someone* most probably refers back to Bea, or Celia - both female referents.

Chadwick & Tadd (1992) explain in the preface that they are going to use *she* in coreference with a *nurse* and *he* in other generic references to avoid "clumsy *he/she* references" (Full quotation can be found in Appendix 1, p 218-19). Checking a few chapters, I discovered that the authors do not always follow their policy, and use other forms apart from the mentioned single-gender pronouns, *he* and *she*. Although the nurse is usually referred to as *she*, there are a few examples where the authors switch to a different form, even in two consecutive sentences, as the following example can illustrate:

[146] This means that it is not enough for *the nurse* to merely arrive on duty, complete *her* shift to the best of *her* ability and go home. A moral obligation is placed on *each individual* to read professional journals, to update *their* knowledge and, of course, to implement well researched improvements in nursing care. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 26)

There is also one example where the authors talk about nurse, again referred to as *practitioner*, using *he or she* form:

- [147] Both the American and the UKCC codes that *each practitioner* is accountable for *his or her* practice... (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 6)

This example refer to how the nurse's accountability is discussed in the UKCC Code of Conduct and the *he or she* form in the above example can come directly from the phrasing in the Code, cf.:

Each registered nurse, midwife and health visitor is accountable for *his or her* practice, ... (Code of Professional Conduct for the Nurse, Midwife and Health Visitor, 1984, quoted in Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 185)

One more example, where Chadwick & Tadd use the dual-gender pronoun is when they discuss the case of a patient, who is a Jehovah's Witness:

- [148] One example often quoted is the case of the Jehovah's Witness. The choice of an adult to refuse a blood transfusion on religious grounds, although difficult, must be accepted on the presumption that *the person* concerned has considered *his or her* religious convictions and would rather die than accept the infusion of another person's blood. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 103)

In example 148 an adult person who is Jehovah's Witness is referred to with a dual-gender pronoun, as if to indicate that it can a man or a woman. However, when the discussion moves to a child of Jehovah's Witness, who is possibly brought up in the same faith, the *child* is referred to with a plural pronoun and this pronoun form continues to be used in a summary of the case:

- [149] Where the decision does not impede *the child* development, then it is reasonable that *they* should be involved in the decision-making and in giving consent. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 103)
- [150] The imposition of another's values and beliefs on *an individual* would be autonomy-reducing and, therefore, not in *their* best interest. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 104)

Chadwick & Tadd use the plural form quite often, in coreference with generic antecedents and indefinite pronouns. In one case the pronoun *they* refers to indefinite pronoun *someone* and a *person*, but both refer to a real life situation where the patient was a woman:

- [151] Once labelled, any behaviour displayed by *the person* is attributed to *their* disposition rather than to the situation, [...]. This patient's continued 'moaning' is seen as a feature of her personality. [...] This highlights quite clearly that the expectation of some nurses is that complaining is not a legitimate activity for *someone* cast in the role of patient, but it is assumed that *they* ought to be grateful for the care *they* receive. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 34)

In the context where the real patient was a woman, Chadwick & Tadd cannot adhere to their pronoun policy which states that patient will be referred to as *he*. Instead, they switch from the specific *she* to the generic *they*. However, in the summary of the case, the feminine is used, although it seems to be used in a generic statement:

- [152] This does not mean that the patient's apparent dissatisfaction cannot be openly and honestly discussed. This in itself may resolve the problem if *the patient* recognises that *her* demands are unrealistic. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 34)

In Downie et al (1992) there are almost as many examples with the masculine as with the dual-gender pronoun and the authors seem to use one form or the other, even when there is no difference between the antecedents, or kind of reference. The following two examples both describe a generic doctor expressed by the same type of antecedent: a noun "doctor" preceded by an indefinite article "a". Despite obvious similarities, two different pronoun forms are employed:

- [153] ... *a doctor* must have the right to intervene, and if *he* has the right to intervene *he* must have duties and responsibilities... (Downie 1992:41)
- [154] But *a doctor* may also have extrinsic aim of furthering positive health in the sense of the well-being and welfare of *his/her* patients. (Downie et al 1992: 37)

The pronoun reference is varied even when the same stylistic device is used. In the two following examples the doctor and apothecary are compared to a shopkeeper, but a "doctor-shopkeeper" is referred to as *he* or *she*, while "apothecary-shop keeper" is used with *he*.

[155] Two extreme opposite goals are prevalent: the "holistic doctor, who treats the whole patient for every dysfunction [...]; or **a humble 'shop-keeper'**, who minds *his or her* own business, treats the specific complaints, and leaves the patient with the maximum autonomy... (Downie et al 1992: 5)

[156] *The apothecary* was originally supposed to be simply a compounder and seller of medicine - **a shopkeeper**; *he* was not allowed to charge for attendance because this encroached on the principles of the physician... (Downie et al 1992: 12)

The above examples indicate that when the antecedent is a single noun phrase, the authors alternate between the dual-gender pronoun and the masculine form. There are two cases where the antecedent is not a single noun, but a disjunction: both are used with the dual-gender pronoun:

[157] ... in other words the individual action of *a doctor* or *other health worker* expresses also the collective values of *his/her* profession. (Downie et al 1992: 42)

Illingworth's (1991) examples display that his generic policy is to use the masculine form. There are only two exceptions to the masculine, where the plural form is used. This deviation from the authors' policy is difficult to explain, as neither use of *they* seems to have a different role than the use of the masculine (e.g. implying plurality or being used with a different kind of antecedent, like an indefinite pronoun instead of a noun phrase). In both cases the antecedents found with *they* are also used with the masculine. In one Illingworth makes coreference with a *parent* (although in the other coreference with a *parent* Illingworth uses the masculine form):

[158] If *the parent* cannot answer the child's question, *they* should say so... (Illingworth 1991: 406)

cf.

[159] If *a parent* picks up coins at home when they do not belong to *him*, the child can be expected to do likewise. (Illingworth 1991: 324)

The other example with *they* refers to a *child*, while in all other examples about a child (referred to as *child*, *baby*, or *infant*), Illingworth uses the masculine as generic. In this particular example, Illingworth switches from *they* to his usual technique – the masculine):

[160] Other parents do not give *their child* time to play on *their* own, organising *his* days to such an extent that *he* has little time to extend *his* knowledge and abilities in play which interests *him*. (Illingworth 1991: 405)

Illingworth uses the masculine in abundance, even if it corefers with two different antecedents in the same sentence, which can be potentially ambiguous:

[161] When *he* [= the older child] wants to play with the *baby* the playing has to be supervised until *he* can be trusted not to hurt *him*, ... (Illingworth 1991: 319)

The masculine form in the subject position refers to the older child, while the masculine in the object position refers to the baby.

In some cases the masculine can be interpreted as referring only to male referents. In the following example the author discusses problems of possible jealousy among siblings:

[162] *A normal child* may be jealous of *his* younger handicapped sister because of the apparent favouritism shown to her, ... (Illingworth 1991: 318)

The question arises how the reader would visualise "a child and his sister" and whether such a statement can be used to mean two sisters. It seems much more likely that the child is imagined to be a boy. A similar "masculine" interpretation might be suggested in one of the previous

examples, namely example [159]. The use of *he* in the coreference with a *parent* can make the reader visualise a father, as it is rather unlikely to be used about a mother.

On the other hand, it should also be pointed out that sometimes the use of *he* works contrary to sexual stereotyping. Illingworth talks for instance about a child interested in the activities in the kitchen or playing with cookery sets, doll's furniture: that is, doing all sorts of things that can be usually associated with girls:

[163] Domestic mimicry is a characteristic feature of *the one-and-a-half to 3-year-old child*. Cookery sets, tea sets, dolls' furniture, sweeping brushes and toy carpet sweepers, will enable *him* to spend many happy hours. (Illingworth 1991: 404)

[164] "Cakes made by *the child* have a specially delightful flavour to *him*. (Illingworth 1991: 404)

[165] *The child* should 'wash up' *his* own cooking utensils. (Illingworth 1991: 404)

Jacobsen (1992) uses the masculine as a generic in all cases unless he refers specifically to women (as is the case when he talks about a patient after Caesarean section). Otherwise the patient (also a child as a patient) is referred to as *he*.

[166] *Each patient* has *his* own individual dose-response curve affecting metabolism and excreta. (Jacobsen 1992: 8)

[167] Ideally, *the child* should remain on *his* side until consciousness is regained. (Jacobsen 1992: 148)

Modell & Modell (1992) consistently use the plural form as a generic in coreference with a *person*.

[168] The 'right' choice differ for *each person* depending on *their* individual circumstances, and ideas of right and wrong. (Modell & Modell 1992: 1)

[169] For example, *a person* may be short because *their* genotype makes them short, ... (Modell & Modell 1992: 11)

Morton & Phillips (1992) mostly use the masculine form (83.87%). A *child* (*baby, toddler, infant*) is referred to as *he*, as in the following two illustrative examples:

- [170] Ask how *the baby* behaves when *he* is not crying – is *he* alert, and *his* usual self, or drowsy and disinterested? (Morton & Phillips 1992: 309)
- [171] A common visitor to the A & E [Accident and Emergency] department is *the crying infant* with *his* distraught parents. (Morton & Phillips 1992: 309)

In one case, however, the authors decide to use the feminine form:

- [172] Accidental scalding usually leaves splash marks and the commonest injury is the scalded face and chest of *the toddler* who pulls a hot liquid down over *herself*. (Morton & Phillips 1992: 183)

Both example [171] and [172] discuss common injuries of children. Taking into account the fact that example [172] is the only one with the feminine form, one may wonder whether the choice of that form reflects the authors' experience (it is usually girls who accidentally pour hot liquid on them), or that this form is the result of social stereotyping (assuming that a child in the kitchen is probably a girl).

There are also three examples with the dual-gender pronoun. This form is used in coreference with *doctor, surgeon* and *A & E SHO* [Accident and Emergency Senior House Officer], although the latter is also referred to as *he*. Cf.:

- [173] It is important to be clear that it is not the duty of *the A & E SHO* to diagnose child abuse. *His or her* duty is to recognise possible abuse and to refer these children for a senior paediatric opinion. (Morton & Phillips 1992: 178)
- [174] *The A & E SHO* must remember that in referring a parent with an injury about whose origin *he* is doubtful, *he* is not accusing a parent of abuse. (Morton & Phillips 1992: 178)

Wright (1990) uses three different generic forms: the masculine, the feminine and the dual-gender pronoun. The feminine is used twice in coreference with a *nurse*, once in a coreference with a *patient*, and one in coreference with a *charismatic leader*, which probably again refers to a *nurse*, or rather a *nurse manager*, who wants to introduce some changes:

[175] *The advanced 'professional' nurse* is both teacher and healer, enhancing *her* own skills and knowledge... (Wright 1990: 101)

[176] Whether it be attending to *a patient's* hygiene, teaching *her* to walk again or comforting *her* when distressed ... (Wright 1990: 25)

[177] ... tapping the skills of *a particular energetic and charismatic leader*, who attempts to lead the staff into change, only to burn out leaving the change to collapse and return to the old order when *she* has gone... (Wright 1990: 14)

There are however a few examples where a *nurse* is referred to with the dual-gender pronoun. In the following example, there are in fact two antecedents, *nurse* and *patient*, and both are referred to as *he or she*:

[178] The care is co-ordinated by *that nurse*, who may be assisted by other acting as *his or her* associate in a comprehensive pattern throughout *patient's* stay in *his or her* setting, ... (Wright 1990: 102)

It should be pointed out that in all other examples with *patient* the masculine form is used, as in:

[179] They share their knowledge and skills with *the patient*. They involve *his* family, partner and other carers. (Wright 1990: 27)

The doctor appears with a generic form only once, with a masculine pronoun:

[180] In this way, nurses are able to manipulate *the doctor's* decision without overtly undermining *his* status or authority. (Wright 1990: 98)

Young (1991) has only four generic references and the dual-gender pronoun is used in all. However, *he or she* does not seem to have precisely the same meaning:

[181] *The child* of any such union will bear obligatory heterozygote since *he or she* must inherit an abnormal allele from the affected parents. (Young 1991: 63)

[182] One of the parents may show gonadal mosaicism – i.e. *one of the parents* harbours a colony of mutant bearing cells in *his or her* gonads. (Young 1991: 51)

In example [181] *he or she* refers to a generic child, and its meaning is sex-neutral – it does not indicate the sex of the referent, but points to the fact that the child can be a boy as well as a girl. In example [182] *he or she* refers to one of the parents, which means that the referent can be either a father (*he*), or a mother (*she*). Here, the dual-gender pronoun seems to have not only a disjunctive syntactic form, but also a disjunctive semantic meaning. A similar case can be seen in example [183], where *he or she*, refers to a disjunction with male and female disjuncts: the patient's brother or sister:

[183] *The healthy brother or sister* of a patient with a severe autosomal recessive disorder may well wish to know the likelihood that *his or her* own child might be affected. (Young 1991: 55)

It seems that although on the surface the pronoun forms in the examples above are the same, their interpretation can be different. In example [181] the dual-gender pronoun refers to one generic referent, which can be any of the boys and/or girls. One of the parents can be either a man or a woman, while in the case of brother or sister, the pronoun forms refer directly to the gender of the antecedents: brother is a "he" and sister is a "she".

4.2.5 Social sciences, psychology and sociology

A. In comparison to other domains, the sample from social sciences, psychology and sociology books could be regarded as least sexist. The usage of the masculine is the smallest from all other domains, both in the

number of tokens with this form (24), and in the number of authors who employ this form as their main or only policy. Only one author, Anthias (1992), chooses masculine as her generic policy, but this choice might have been dictated by the masculine nature of the antecedents (see the discussion of her examples). Most authors seem to be aware of a possible pronoun bias, as in some cases where they decide to use the masculine, they justify their pronoun choice in the immediate context (see e.g. the discussion of Jenkins 1992 or Cole 1992). It is noteworthy that although these domains seem to be the least sexist, none of the books examined contains a pronoun policy.

These domains are also characterised by the smallest number of feminine pronouns. The authors definitely prefer forms like *they* or the dual-gender pronoun to single-gender pronouns. The dual-gender pronoun seems to be most popular (especially *he/she*) - it is chosen as main or only pronoun policy by five authors. Also the plural form *they* is used in social sciences, psychology and sociology much more often than in other domains. Moreover, in contrast to other domains, it is not limited to examples with indefinite pronouns, but is most often used in coreference with singular noun antecedents. Statistical description of the domain can be found in Table 5, p 236.

Comparing all domains examined, one more thing may be noticed about social sciences: it has the least number of examples found - less than a half or a third of the number found in other domains. This can of course be due to the topic or to the fact that the authors often referred to specific cases, which were not included in the corpus. But at the same time, specific cases were also typical for law books, which have twice as many examples. It is possible that one of the authors' policies to avoid sex-bias was avoidance of generic pronoun forms; hence such a small number of

generic examples. Apart from two books, O'Connor & Seymour (1993) and Baron et al (1992), the number of examples per book oscillates around ten, in most cases less than that.

B. a) Psychology

The predominant generic form in Baron et al (1992) is the dual-gender pronoun, which appears in various alternatives: *he or she*, *he/she*, *she or he*, *she/he*, sometimes observable even in one sentence:

- [184] In one condition *each group member* had *his/her* own portion of the screen to monitor: *she/he* bore complete responsibility for detecting the dots that flashed in that portion... (Baron et al 1992: 54)

Apart from the dual-gender pronoun, in Baron et al there are three examples of the plural form *they* and three examples of the masculine. Plural *they* is used, for instance, in the following example, which describes a figure:

- [185] In Figure LI B, *each individual* can only communicate to the two individuals adjacent to *them* in the network. (Baron et al 1992: 10)

It is difficult to explain the authors choice, especially that when they describe a similar figure, they use *he or she*:

- [186] Finally, in Figure LI E the lower *an individual's* status the less communication options *he or she* has. (Baron et al 1992: 10)

In one case the use of *they* indicates plurality of referents. In the following example the antecedent of *they* is *more than one person*, which means that the pronoun refers to at least two people or more:

- [187] Moreover, there was a catch - if *more than one person* pressed *their* switch at the same time, no one could escape ... (Baron et al 1992: 43)

It can be noticed that the masculine appears in twice as many tokens as *they*. The choice of the masculine pronoun can sometimes be explained by

the masculine nature of the antecedents. It is used, for instance, in reference to coach and lumberjack, which are often regarded as male-related professions:

[188] ... e.g. *a skilled lumberjack* could undoubtedly cut, trim, split, and had more timber on *his* own, than any given group of, say, 3 psychology professors. (Baron et al 1992: 33)

[189] In the closing minutes of a tight athletic contest, *a successful coach* cannot worry unduly about the egos of *his* player or take time to consider all opinions. (Baron et al 1992: 13)

Other examples with the masculine form are used in descriptions of experiments, and it might be hypothesised that the real subjects in these experiments were men. However, such interpretation does not hold, as it cannot explain a switch of pronouns in one of the descriptions, which is quoted here in full context:

[190] Regardless of condition, *the subject* received accurate feedback on *his/her* performance after each trial. However, in the dyads, the feedback on the partner's performance was false and designed to encourage free riding. After each and every trial, *the subject* learned that *his* partner had succeeded. It should have soon become evident to the *dyad member* that *he* could ride on *his* partner's efforts ... (Baron et al 1992: 52)

The example starts with the dual-gender form used in coreference with *the subject*, however, in the references that follow the authors switch to the masculine.

Most examples in Elliot (1991) refer to specific cases she describes, and in some the real case might have dictated the choice of pronoun. In the following example, *someone* might be interpreted as a generic and also a specific reference to Cardinal, who was one of the subjects discussed by Elliot:

[191] Cardinal's discourse is repeating or reproducing hysterical discourse from the vantage point of *someone* who has gained access to the analysis of *her* desire. (Elliot 1991: 26)

The specific interpretation of the above example might be reinforced by the fact that in another example about a hysteric, Elliot uses *he or she*

[192] Since *the hysteric* has no access to the object of *his/her* desire, the knowledge of the unconscious that is produced is not recognizable as such. (Elliot 1991: 18)

Also in the following example, the feminine form might have referred specifically to women analysands, if we knew that most or all of Freud's patients were women:

[193] Freud, while practising psychoanalysis discovered the importance of allowing himself to be positioned as the other by *the analysand*, who then transferred *her* wishes and thoughts onto him. (Elliot 1991: 13)

In another example, which is Elliot's own translation of an original French quotation, the choice of the pronoun form is probably dictated by the gender in the original French text, which is "Pour lui [le psychoanalyste]...", where "lui" and "le psychoanalyste" are of masculine gender. Hence the translation reads:

[194] "For *him* [*the psychoanalyst*] the latent content is the interpretation that *he* will make..." (Elliot 1991: 20)

However, in still another example, which refers to another quotation from French, where the masculine form is used, Elliot's comment on this quotation makes it necessary for her to change the original pronoun usage to a dual-gender pronoun:

[195] Once the subject has been tied to "**his**" gender identity, "**he**" is no longer a neutral subject (as this translation of Foucault implies) but a *masculine or feminine subject* with different means and motives for resisting *his or her* identity. (Elliot 1991: 7)

This example proves that a choice of a particular pronoun form might be meaningful for the interpretation of the whole message. Elliot clearly "corrects" the masculine form used by Foucault, as in her interpretation the

subject is either masculine or feminine, and therefore is a *he* or a *she*. It is quite possible, therefore, that Elliot's choice of a dual-gender pronoun in reference to "the other" in the following example is also indicative,

- [196] Such deception allowed Mrs. G to construe her analysis as another game that, like the game she played with her mother, involved playing the desire of *the other* by telling *him/her* what *he/she* wants to hear: ... (Elliot 1991: 48)

Mrs G., whose case is analysed by Elliot, was a woman who wanted to and imagined herself to be a man; *he/she* might therefore point to the double personality of this specific person.

O'Connor & Seymour's (1990) examples show that their main generic policy (used in more than half of generic references) is *they*. This form does not seem to be restricted only to some antecedents; it is used, for instance, in coreference with singular noun phrase, like *person*, but also with indefinite pronouns, *someone*, *anyone*, *everyone*. However, both *person* and indefinite pronouns are also used with other pronoun forms.

Generics used in coreference to *person* are particularly varied. *Person* is often used with *they*, but also with the double-gender pronoun:

- [197] With *an angry person*, match *their* anger a little below *their* level. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 22)

- [198] You are more likely to gain rapport with *a person* who thinks in the same way as you, and you discover this by listening to the words *he or she* uses, regardless whether you agree with *them* or not. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 32)

- [199] *A person* who speaks slowly, with a deep voice, breathing deeply as *he or she* does so, will probably rely on *their* feelings to a large extent. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 40)

In example [199], we can observe a switch from the dual-gender pronoun to *they*. It might be suggested that example [198] is another instance of a pronoun switch; however, it is not clear whether *they* corefers with the

person (according to the authors' usual technique) or the words that this person uses.

Person is also used with single-gender pronouns:

[200] You say your sentence in the three ways to *another person*, without telling *her* the three messages you wished to convey. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 17)

[201] For example, *a person* may say *he* does not see any mental pictures. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 33)

Indefinite pronouns are usually used with *they*

[202] *Everyone* thinks *they* are right. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 32)

[203] You have probably had the experience of making a neutral remark to *someone*, and being amazed at the meaning *they* read into it. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 17)

However, as can be seen in the following example, *someone* is also used with the masculine:

[204] To say that *someone* is a visual type is no more useful than saying *he* has red hair. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 41)

Some examples with the masculine form seem to indicate an exemplification, presenting a referent in a particular situation, so that the reader can visualise one person and not a generic representative:

[205] For example, in the auditory question about the loudest slamming door, *a person* might visualise each door, mentally feel *himself* slamming it and then hear the sound. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 39)

[206] Consider three people who have just read the same book [...] *The second* might object to the tone of the book; [...]. In fact, *he* cannot tune in to the *author's* ideas at all, and *he* would like to tell *him* so. *The third* feels the book dealt with a weighty subject in a balanced way. *He* liked the way the author touched all the key topics, [...] You will notice that *each person* expressed *themselves* about the same book in a different way. (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 31)

The latter example employs the masculine when discussing two of the three person-readers, as well as the writer; even if the masculine forms intermingle, as in the part "*he* would like to tell *him* so" where both *he* forms refer to two different antecedents, the second *person-reader* and the *writer* respectively. However, although each person-reader is a *he*, the pronoun coreference with '*each person*' is *they*.

In some cases the use of the masculine may be governed by the male-related nature of the antecedent. Masons, woodcarvers or tennis coaches, who are referents in the following examples, are mostly, if not entirely, men:

[207] *A mason or woodcarver* must be sensitive to the feel of *his* material to release the figure imprisoned in the stone or wood.
(O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 26)

[208] *The coach* [= tennis coach] would probably watch you play, then start changing such things as your footwork, [...]. In other words *he* would take what was for you one piece of behaviour - hitting a forehand drive - break it down into some of its component parts; ...
(O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 8)

Looking at the variety of forms used by O'Connor & Seymour it is not always possible to find the reasons lying behind the authors' choice of a given form; although, as the authors suggest in the following example, NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming) book writers choose their words very carefully:

[209] It is possible to find out the preferred system of *the writer* of any book by paying attention to the language *he or she* uses.
(Except for NLP books where the writers may take a rather more calculated approach to the words they use). (O'Connor & Seymour 1993: 31)

(The dual-gender pronoun in the above example is definitely generic and does not, for instance refer to O'Connor & Seymour themselves - they are both men)

b) Social sciences

Anthias (1992) uses the masculine form in coreference with a generic *person*, but also in coreference with *peasant*

[210] Ethnicity is regarded as a cognitive category that classifies *a person* in terms of *his* most basic, most general identity, presumably determined by *his* origin and background. (Anthias 1992: 12)

[211] However, the credit cooperative societies mitigated to some extent the dependence of *the Cypriot peasant* on the merchant broker for tiding *him* over in times of poor harvest. (Anthias 1992: 35)

The use of the masculine in the latter example may not only reflect the author's pronoun policy, but also the typical male image of a peasant.

Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1992) consistently use the dual-gender pronoun both in reference to a generic person, or a particular person:

[212] There must be full disclosure of all aspects that *a person* concerned about *his or her* welfare would need to know before making a decision. (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992: 82)

[213] *The particular person* may be a member of a social club with a long tradition of Republican political attachment, and this may outweigh the influence of *his or her* ethnic identification. (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992: 11)

Although the authors' pronoun policy is consistent, the same pronoun form does not always refer to exactly the same linguistic situation. In the following example, describing a real-life situation, the dual-gender pronoun does not refer to a fictitious, generic referent, but underlines the fact that there were representatives of both sexes among the townspeople:

[214] Not only was this aspect of study severely criticized, but the townspeople staged a parade in which *each* wore a mask on which was written a fictitious name given to *him or her* by the researcher ... (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992: 85)

Jenkins (1992) also prefers the dual-gender pronoun:

[215] Second, there is an awareness of that distortion and of *the observer* as a competent social actor in *his/her* own right. (Jenkins 1992: 50)

[216] Bourdieu is probably wrong to suggest that it is easier for *the sociologist* than the anthropologist to analyse *his or her* own experience in the same way that *they* analyse the experience of others. (Jenkins 1992: 52)

The latter example contains also a switch from the dual-gender pronoun to the plural; which might suggest that while the dual-gender pronoun refers to a sociologist, the plural most probably refers to both sociologist and anthropologist.

c) Sociology

Bury & Holme (1991) generally use the plural form *they* in their pronoun references:

[217] There are clearly health and material needs which cannot always be met by *the individual* or *their* families. (Bury & Holme 1991: 164)

[218] The fact that *someone* has chosen to go into residential care or, even more so if *they* have been placed there against *their* preference, should not mean that, once there, *they* relinquish all further choice any more than that *their* dignity be undermined. (Bury & Holme 1991: 130)

In the latter example the indefinite pronoun *someone* refers to "an elderly *person*", which is the main subject matter of the book. The only example with a different pronoun form, namely *he or she*, is used in the first chapter and is at the same time the only generic form found in that chapter:

[219] It is generally held to be the case that the economic and social position of *a person* in retirement is an extension of *his or her* earlier position in the labour market. (Bury & Holme 1991: 30)

Cole (1992) clearly indicates his desire not to be accused of sexism when he writes about "male renderings of women's lives" and justifies his usage of "male" adding "I am not aware of any female artists in this genre)" (1992: 26). As far as pronoun choice is concerned, Cole's usage seems to reflect the state of reality, as can be illustrated by the following example (see also example discussed in 4.6):

[220] The stage metaphor also made it possible for *every individual* to understand *himself* (**and by the seventeenth century, herself**) as the central actor in *his or her* pilgrimage. The motif provided a visual means for *each person* to step outside *his* own life experience and view it as a whole. (Cole 1992: 25)

In example [220] Cole clearly indicates that *he* could refer to both sexes only since 17th century, and before it could refer only to men. Therefore, *each person* in the sentence following most probably refers to the time before 17th century and is gender-specific.

However, in the following example about a Puritan, interpreting the masculine form used as referring only to men does not seem to be justified in real-life:

[221] Although *no Puritan* dared take *his* election for granted, older Puritans generally benefited from the opinion that old age itself might be a sign of election. (Cole 1992: 38)

Puritans were both men and women; moreover, the author himself, mentions that, for instance, in the Puritan vision of life as a pilgrimage, both men and women were playing their parts: "Nor did Puritans restrict their journey to men only, in contrast to classical and medieval writers" (1992: 39).

Hughes (1991) generally avoids using generics through pluralizing, and in the few cases that she makes a generic reference, she uses sex-neutral forms: *he or she* and *they*. Four examples refer to practically the same

kind of antecedent: *stepparent*, or *parent*, expressed more precisely as *either mother or father*.

[222] For example, *the stepparent* has no legal rights or duties in relation to *his or her* stepchildren... (Hughes 1991: 16)

[223] In the event of death, *either mother or father* will be a lone parent prior to remarriage. Nevertheless, *their* experience of lone parenthood may well match that of the divorced. (Hughes 1991: 7)

Interestingly, in the latter reference, Hughes prefers the plural form, even though the phrase *either mother or father* suggests that it can be only one of the two, either *he or she* and not both of them, as the association with the plural form *they* might suggest. Moreover, the dual-gender pronoun might directly correspond to both referents; either father - *he*, or mother - *she*.

In Szinovacz et al (1992) all three chapters examined, written by different people, have practically the same generic form: *he or she*:

[224] Marital satisfaction is generally conceived of as *an individual's* perception of the quality of *his or her* marriage. (Szinovacz et al 1992: 146)

[225] Or consider how the residential mobility of *the retiree* and *his or her* spouse could bring about shifts in family network structure. (Szinovacz et al 1992: 10)

One may wonder whether a single-gender form might be used in the two above examples. Marriage exists between people of opposite sexes (at least so far it has), so the dual-gender form emphasises the fact that a spouse may be a husband or a wife. There is only one case where the authors use a single-gender pronoun:

[226] Consider, for example, the family of *a prominent local business figure*. *Her* retirement may diminish the family's prestige and social standing in the community. (Szinovacz et al. 1992: 10)

It is worth noting that the use of the feminine form in the above example works against the social stereotypes (and often reality) – where “a prominent local business figure” is most often a man.

4.3 Ambiguous cases

In most examples classified as ambiguous, the ambiguity results from the fact that the antecedent does not seem to correspond to the pronoun form or indeed cannot be identified at all. These examples were not incorporated in the corpus and not taken into account in statistical tables.

In some cases the pronoun did not seem to be in agreement with the antecedent. In the following example, a singular feminine pronoun refers to a plural antecedent:

Many nurses are no longer willing to follow blindly the doctor's orders and in the case of moral demands *she* may well be right in resisting. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 60)

The reader can understand that the feminine form refers to a nurse, but the only antecedent found in the context is the plural form *nurses*.

In another similar example it is the masculine which refers to a plural noun phrase:

Thus the outcome of the *individuals'* moral judgements (which may be based on *his* own and others' selfish interests) may in turn determine the preferences stated in an election... (Craven 1992: 9)

The example above might be a result of an orthographic mistake:

individuals' instead of *individual's*, especially that in previous sentences the author was writing about one individual, e.g.:

If the tax-benefit issue or the issue of censorship were to be put to a referendum, an *individual* would vote according to *his* moral judgements and not according to *his* personal preferences. (Craven 1992: 9)

In the following example, Bury & Holme (1991) quote a statement of one of the elderly people they studied:

People nowadays are provided for when they are old. I remember the time when the first five shillings was given to *the pensioner*.

up to that time *they* got nothing. (quoted by Bury & Holme 1991: 46)

"The pensioner" here is a generic pensioner, referring to the whole group of retired people - "*they* got nothing" means "pensioners got nothing", and the masculine form used here would have sounded a bit awkward, even though it would fulfil the grammatical agreement.

The following example also seems to represent breaking agreement.

Blackburn makes a reference to an MP by means of a dual-gender pronoun. The sentence which follows still employs the same pronoun form, but in the meantime there seems to appear a new candidate for an antecedent:

Another fundamental of any electoral system must be to promote a close link between an *MP* and *his or her* constituency. It is essential to retain the political advantages of our system of local representation, with *MPs* being responsible to local opinion and representing local interests in the Commons, and individual citizens being able to call on *his or her* services... (Blackburn 1993: 94)

The problem here is that the second occurrence of *he or she* does not seem to have an antecedent in the immediate context - the closest noun phrase is the plural form *MPs*. However, the reference to individual citizens in the context suggests that the real antecedent is a singular *MP*. Each citizen can only have one MP.

There were several instances where it was difficult to identify the antecedent as such. In the following example, which I quote in full context, there are several noun phrases, which might be possible antecedents for the form *her*: *the individual practitioner* discussed in the paragraph as well as *nurses* or *one person*, which appear in the immediate context of the feminine form:

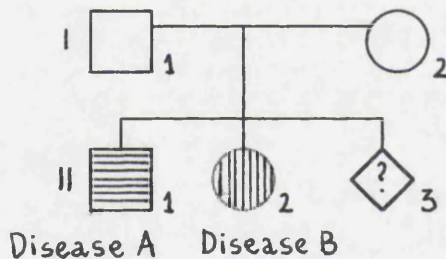
Again any decision is one for the individual practitioner to make and to justify. But, what this case shows us is that there is another set of interests to take into consideration in making that decision,

namely the interests of the practitioner herself, and the long-term effects on her of trying to become an accomplished liar. Damage may be limited if patients can find the way to confide in their relatives, or if nurses can find forms of words that do not amount to lies, but there will inevitably be some occasions on which individual nurses have to weigh up one person's interest in confidentiality against the competing interests of others, including *her* own. (Chadwick & Tadd 1992: 13)

Sometimes it was difficult to determine who/what the referent is. Young (1991), for instance has a following example:

If *II3* in Fig. 4.12 is not affected with either disorder *he or she* may well wish to know the probability of heterozygosity for diseases A and/or B. (Young 1991: 68)

The statement is based on the following figure, which appears on the previous page:



Looking at the picture alone it is difficult to state who or what this *II3* actually is: disease, person? One has to read all the text to understand that the case described by the picture refers to a couple who wants to know whether their third child can inherit a particular disease. Thus *II3* turns out to be "the third child". However, substituting "the third child" for "*II3*" in the statement above does not seem a logical possibility; it seems improbable that "a child" is interested in the probability of getting a particular disease. The referent may still be the third child of the exemplary couple, but it is not the child who is to be born, but an already grown up person.

There was also one case where the antecedent did not appear in the text at all:

Everyone knows the old saying: if you can't get their attention in the first sentence (or the first eight sentences) they won't bother with the rest. And news editors want to know 'what's the point of the story?'

There does not seem to exist an antecedent of the pronoun form *they*. Although *they* is often used with indefinite pronouns it is unlikely that it refers to *everybody* in this fragment. *Everybody* most probably means here "all people, especially journalists", whereas I understand that the pronoun "they" refers to people the writers/journalists want to attract with their writing, some future readers. In this respect, the remaining antecedent, "news editors", might be future readers, as actually they are often the first and sometimes even the only readers. However, it still seems uncertain whether Bagnall's generalisation is restricted only to news editors, especially in connection with "an old saying". Thus, the antecedent is implied, but does not appear.

The pronoun form can also be misleading, as can be seen in the following example from Hughes (1991) where she discusses possible problems between children and their stepparents:

Comments such as "*He/she* earns more than *he/she* says", "*He's/she's* a liar", "You can guess what *he/she's* been saying about me" and "*he/she's* always keeping secrets" were particularly common. (Hughes 1991: 125)

The pronoun forms Hughes uses, at first glance look like a classic example of a dual-gender pronoun. However, the *he/she* does not refer to one generic individual, but both to a particular daughter and son. Hughes cites comments she often heard from stepparents, so she must have referred to particular cases about particular people. Such interpretation can also be proved by the form used in one of the above cited comments - "*He's/she's* a

liar", where the pronoun forms appear with abbreviated forms of "to be". This is not a sex-neutral pronoun form, but simply an abbreviation of two different sentences. Hughes only says that it is either a stepson ("he"), or a stepdaughter ("she") who is a liar.

4.4 Different categories of antecedents

4.4.1 Syntactic characteristics of antecedents

Noun phrases constituted the overwhelming majority of antecedents: almost 94% of all generic references found in the corpus had noun phrases as antecedents. Thus pronouns functioned as antecedents only in 5.18% of generic pronominal references. The number of all pronoun references is 1428, while the number of all antecedents is 1411. The difference results from the fact that some antecedents coreferred with two (fifteen antecedents) or three different pronouns (one antecedent; see example [1]). Seven of the antecedents coreferred with both *he* and *he or she* (see e.g. examples [1], [24], [59], [96], [101], [118], [133]); six antecedents were referred to with *they* (usually in the subject position) and *he or she* (see e.g. examples [18], [198], [199]); other variations were *he/they* (see example [60]), and different variations of the dual-gender pronoun: *he/she* versus *she/he* as can be seen in example [184].

a) Noun phrases as antecedents

Definite noun phrases (noun phrases preceded by the article [*the*], no article, demonstrative [*this* or *that*] or possessive adjectives [*his*, *her*, *their*, *our*, *your*], or proper names) account for more than a half of all the antecedents.

Indefinite noun phrases [noun phrases preceded by the indefinite article [*a*, *an*] or by the numeral [*one*] were found as antecedents in one-third of all generic references. Noun phrases preceded by quantifiers [*each*, *every*, *some*, *any*, *no*] constituted only about 6% of all the antecedents.

Both the noun phrases preceded by indefinite articles and the noun phrases preceded by definite articles have a similar distribution of coreferring pronouns: the masculine (around 60%), the feminine (around 10%), the dual-gender pronoun (around 20%), and the plural (less than 10%). Although the occurrences of the plural as a generic form are not numerous, it is worth noting that this form appears with indefinite and definite noun phrases alike. There are in fact more instances of the plural coreferring with definite noun phrases than with indefinite noun phrases (forty-one and thirty-three, respectively). This result might seem contradictory to the expectations of McConnell-Ginet (1979), who argued that the plural cannot corefer with definite antecedents. However, McConnell-Ginet (1979) should be given credit because of the small percentage of occurrence of the plural used with definite antecedents. She was also right to predict that definite antecedents are more likely to be found with single-gender pronouns (the masculine or the feminine). This hypothesis is especially true in the cases of antecedents like, *Smith, player 1*, [person] *A* or *B*, etc., which were found with single-gender pronouns in around 90% of cases. The single-gender pronouns are also predominant in most exemplifications (which can be compared to specific

references, as they look as if the referent was one specific, although imaginary, person).

Disjunctions, especially disjunctions with male and female disjuncts (like *mother or father*), are according to McConnell-Ginet (1979) unlikely to be found with the masculine. In my sample, disjunctions constituted a very small group of antecedents: only sixteen disjunctive phrases were found, out of which there were six with masculine and feminine disjuncts and one with masculine and neutral disjuncts (*the father or other person*). The pronouns found with disjunctions were the masculine and the dual-gender pronoun. There was only one instance of the plural, which coreferred with *mother or father*. All other disjunctions with masculine and feminine members (e.g. *the healthy brother or sister, the doctor, nurse, or other health worker, a masculine or a feminine subject, a priest or nun, his mother or father*) were used with the dual-gender form, which confirms McConnell-Ginet's hypothesis. The remaining disjunctions were found mostly with the masculine.

Noun phrases preceded by quantifiers are usually found with the masculine pronoun. The plural is found here only with quantifiers like *every, each* and *no*, which can be probably explained by the fact that these quantifiers often suggest a notional plurality of the antecedents.

b) Pronouns as antecedents

Indefinite pronouns constituted the majority among pronominal antecedents (more than 80%). Other pronominal forms found are: *each* (seven instances), *another* (two instances), *one* (three instances) and *whoever* (only one instance). The plural form was found coreferring with pronominal antecedents in more

than half of all the references. The masculine was used in 20% of cases, most often with indefinite pronouns. Interestingly this form was not found to corefer with *each*, the dual-gender form was typically used in this case.

The indefinite pronouns are worth a more detailed analysis, as they were subject of attention of many authors and researchers. These pronouns, although singular in form, are often notionally plural (see e.g. Wales 1984), and therefore can often be found with the plural form. This was confirmed by the results of my research, where the indefinite pronouns coreferred with the plural in more than half of references with indefinite pronoun. It must be pointed out, however, that the indefinite pronouns have not got the monopoly over *they*; the plural has been found more often with singular noun phrases than with indefinite pronouns.

The plural is mostly used with *everyone*, whose meaning is mostly plural, but is also often found with *someone*, which is the least "plural" in meaning of all the indefinite pronouns (see Wales 1984). Thus it seems that notional plurality does not necessarily have any impact on the choice of the coreferring pronoun. Moreover, an examination of indefinite pronouns shows that most authors do not seem to have any special pronoun technique when using indefinite pronouns as antecedents. Only Hodge & Kress (1993), Blakemore (1992), and to some extent Cameron et al (1992) use a different pronominal (the plural), than in references with singular noun phrases (where they use single-gender or dual-gender forms). It must also be stressed that the small number of occurrences with indefinite pronouns cannot give a clear picture: it is difficult to generalise on authors' generic technique when the majority of authors have only one reference with indefinite pronoun. This small percentage of indefinite pronouns in comparison to other antecedents

demonstrates that one cannot generalise on typical generic forms on the basis of the indefinite pronouns, as was done by Sullivan (1983).

4.4.2 Semantic characteristics of antecedents

Many researchers have pointed out that the choice of generic pronoun may be governed by sex-role stereotypes. This is supposed to be the case, when the antecedents are dual-gender nouns denoting occupations. Some researchers, e.g. MacKay & Fulkerson (1979) divide different kinds of antecedents into male-related, female-related and neutral, depending on whether the reference is made to a predominantly male, female or neutral class. I have decided to follow their division of antecedents to see whether the pronoun forms found with different semantic categories of antecedents reflect stereotyping.

a) Male-related category

Male-related antecedents are those which are strongly associated with men. These are usually professions which are mostly held by men or at least are thought to be male domain according to social stereotyping. Among the male-related referents that I have found in my corpus are: politicians, doctors, farmers, academics, managers, officers, lawyers.

Five authors make references to people in politics: Bird (1993), Blackburn (1993), Delmas-Marty (1992), Nerhot (1990) and Vincenzi & Marrington (1992). Bird uses the masculine in reference to the Secretary of State. Blackburn generally uses the dual-gender pronouns in reference to a politician, a Member of Parliament, or the Prime Minister, but he also has two examples with the feminine pronoun coreferring with a Minister. Delmas-Marty uses the masculine form when talking about a politician and the Secretary of State.

Nerhot makes only one masculine reference about a Minister. Vincenzi & Marrington also have only one masculine reference to the Secretary of State. Four out of five authors use the masculine in reference to politicians. It must be mentioned, however, that the four authors who use masculine forms in reference to people in politics generally favour the masculine.

Antecedents referring to medical profession, which were found in this corpus include the following: *doctor, clinician, physician, (medical) practitioner* and *surgeon*. The masculine is employed by five authors, three of which use only the masculine, and two mostly masculine, but also sex-neutral forms. Five authors use only nonsexist forms; four use the dual-gender and one – the feminine. What can be observed is then an almost status quo between the masculine and nonsexist forms with a slight predominance of the latter forms.

The following antecedents have been classified as academic: *the French Academic, Dean, linguist, professor, researcher, scholar, scientist, semanticist, zoologist, sociologist* and *theorist*. Three authors who use the masculine: Milroy & Milroy (1991), Thomas (1991) and Nerhot (1990), are those whose main generic policy is the masculine. Sex-neutral forms are a more common choice; dual-gender is used by five authors and the feminine is used by four authors.

Judge, lawyer, legal practitioner and *plaintiff* represent the legal profession. Three out of four authors using these antecedents prefer the masculine form. One author (Burton 1992) varies the usage: he uses a masculine, a feminine and a double neutral construction in reference to judge.

Manager, director, supervisor, chief executive, executive are classified as managerial posts. A director, supervisor, executive and chief executive are

always referred to with the masculine pronoun. Manager is used with the masculine in most cases. Only one author (Bryce 1991) varies the pronoun reference using the masculine and the plural, but in most cases this author chooses the dual-gender.

Another category is *worker*. Out of six authors only two use the masculine in coreference to *worker*; in Bagnall (1993) there is one occurrence of *worker*, in Vincenzi & Marrington (1992) *worker* appears four times with the masculine and once with *he or she*. The remaining authors prefer sex neutral forms especially the dual-gender. Only one author, Holmes (1992), uses the plural.

Officers are also usually associated as a masculine profession. In my corpus *officer*, whether it is a *Child Support Officer*, *Accident and Emergency Senior House Officer* (abbreviated by the authors as *A & E SHO*) or *Immigration Officer* is almost always coreferring with the masculine form. The only exception is the dual-gender used in one case in reference to A & E SHO (in Morton & Phillips 1992, who use the masculine in all other references to A & E SHO). Inspector and sea captain are other referents which appear only with masculine forms.

Other antecedents found in my corpus, which are associated with men, *farmer* and *peasant*, are referred to with the masculine pronouns. So are the masculine professions of *machinist*, *lumberjack* and *mason* or *woodcarver*. Also *dictator*, *coach*, *chairman*, *shopforeman*, *salesman*, *merchant* are used with the masculine. It is worth noting that the author who chooses the form *salesman* (Pepper 1992) also uses the masculine pronoun, while the authors who prefer the sex-neutral variation *salesperson* (Kassarjian & Robertson 1991) choose a sex-neutral pronoun form (*he or she*) in reference. There is only one example of a house-seller which is used with the feminine form (in

Craven 1992). The choice of the pronoun is dictated here by the author's policy to use a feminine pronoun as a generic in this particular chapter where the house-seller appears.

b) Female-related category

This category is less numerous than male-related or neutral categories and includes professions which traditionally are thought to be female. There are only three female-related professions that I have found in my corpus: *nurse*, *secretary*, and *telephone receptionist*.

In reference to nurses two authors (Benjamin & Curtis 1992 and Catalano 1991) use the feminine and two others (Wright 1990 and Chadwick & Tadd 1992) vary their usage between the feminine and dual-gender.

I found only two examples about *secretary*. Tack (1992) uses the traditional feminine form and Holmes (1992) uses a dual-gender *s/he*.

A reference to a telephone receptionist is made only once. Tack (1992) uses a dual-gender; this is an exceptional usage for an author who generally prefers the masculine. Tack's usage might probably reflect the fact that this profession is associated too much as a female profession to be used with the masculine.

c) Neutral category

Neutral categories are those which are not stereotypically associated with either men or women; these consist of nouns which do not reflect professions, but make references to people in general. From the examples found in my corpus I would include to this category nouns like: *child*, *person*, *citizen*,

individual. Nouns which can refer to both men and women, like *parent* belong to this category as well.

The most commonly found neutral antecedent is *person*. This form is suggested as a gender-neutral substitute for *man* in many non-sexist language guidelines. *Person* was found in as many as thirty five authors. Most authors (twenty one out of thirty five, so almost two-thirds) use this form with sex-neutral pronouns. Eleven authors use the masculine in all or in most cases. The remaining authors vary the pronoun forms between an equal number of the masculine and the dual-gender pronouns.

Four authors out of seventeen who write about *individual* use the masculine form. Two authors vary their pronoun usage between the masculine and other forms. Craven (1992) uses either masculine or the feminine, while Chadwick & Tadd (1992) chooses between the masculine or *they*. The remaining authors use nonsexist forms (mostly the dual-gender pronoun) in all or the majority of instances.

Friend or *colleague* is referred to with a variety of forms. Wright (1990) uses the feminine only. Kassarian & Robertson (1991) use the feminine as well as the dual-gender. The feminine is used about a friend who is to demonstrate a new house appliance, and the dual-gender when the authors define friendship. O'Connor & Seymour (1993) use either the masculine or the feminine; both examples are exemplifications and the authors simply seem to alternate the two single-gender pronoun forms.

Some authors, refer to a person or individual as *individual i* or *individual j* or just *i* or *j*, call them Smith or Jones, or even treat them as *A*, *B*, or *Z*. In this way such antecedents can be treated as instances of exemplification rather

than real generics and that is probably why the authors prefer to use single-gender pronouns, the masculine or the feminine in reference. One author, Coleman (1992), uses the masculine with A and the feminine with B (see also example 81). The same alternating technique is chosen by Craven (1992) who uses the masculine with individual *j* or *j* and the feminine with individual *i* or *i*.

Another type of referents, *citizen* and *national* is described with the masculine or the dual-gender (mostly in agreement with the general policy of the authors in other examples).

Child, *baby*, *infant* and *toddler* are also common antecedents classified in the neutral (as well as neuter) category. The majority of authors prefer to use the masculine form in coreference with *child*. Five authors practically use only the masculine, three authors use the dual-gender and two authors vary their usage. It is interesting to note that in a hundred and twenty three examples and eleven authors using this antecedent, only one author has two examples of child referred to by means of the neuter pronoun "it", even though "it" is regarded as a correct form in reference to child in many grammar books.

Parent is particularly worth examining, because it might be expected that a parent, who may be either male or female, might be most often used with the dual-gender. However, this pronoun form is found in only one instance, in reference to a stepparent. Most authors seem to prefer to identify a parent either with a mother or a father. At least there is an almost equal number of examples with masculine and feminine pronouns used in reference to parent. Some authors, like Bird (1993), always use the masculine in reference to an absent parent and the feminine in reference to a parent with care. Three

authors use the plural pronoun in reference to a parent and a disjunction *mother or father*.

Patient is used with a masculine pronoun reference only by five authors. One of them have only one feminine reference and eight masculine references to patient. Three authors use the dual-gender and one author uses plural. Two authors have an equal number of masculine and dual-gender references.

In reference to *writer*, *author*, *reporter* and *journalist* the authors choose either the masculine, or the dual-gender in almost an equal number of examples. *Author* and *journalist* seems to be more masculine than *writer*. There is only one case where the feminine is used (in reference to reporter).

Reader and *viewer* are used with sex-neutral forms: mostly dual-gender and in three examples with the plural. Only one author, Pepper (1992), uses the masculine in reference to a reader.

Speaker, *interlocutor*, *communicator* and *interviewer* are used with either masculine or dual-gender. There are also two examples of the speaker used with the plural form.

Consumer, *customer*, *client* and *buyer* are mostly found with sex-neutral forms, mostly the dual-gender and, in one case, the plural. Only one author uses the masculine in all references. Another author, Foxall (1990), uses the masculine in one exemplification, about a consumer who suffers damage to "his" taste buds. The same author also uses the feminine in another exemplification about a customer who is making a complaint.

If pronoun usage reflected social gender stereotyping, then it would reveal a picture of changing society, where equal opportunities policies start to prevail.

However, some professions still seem to be mostly male dominion. This can be said about managerial posts and legal profession, as well as politicians (including dictators). The predominance of masculine forms used here may reflect the fact that in reality women politicians, managers and lawyers still constitute the minority. It should be stressed, however, that most authors writing about these professions simply choose the masculine as their generic policy. Whether they choose this form because of aesthetic reasons or because it reflects the reality (= male predominance in these areas) is difficult to assess. Sometimes even the authors' note cannot indicate which one is true. Houston & Lewis (1992: xiii) explain that they use the masculine for "the sake of brevity and convenience, despite the undoubted fact that there are a growing number of highly competent and well-qualified women being appointed to boards"; thus their choice was governed by stylistic reasons, however, the reference to growing number of women entering the profession suggests that so far the profession was mostly male.

Other occupations where men dominate are *sea captain*, *coach* (*tennis coach*, *athletics coach*), *inspector* and *officer*. There are some professions which are probably not likely to be taken by women, because they require physical ("masculine") strength, like *lumberjack*, *mason* or *woodcarver*. Such referents will probably always be referred to with masculine forms.

Also the usage of pronouns with typically feminine occupations, like secretary or nurse, might suggest that men are not likely to be found in these professions. Some examples still reveal the stereotypical pattern of male boss and female secretary, and even though sex-neutral pronouns are found with *nurse*, most specific cases refer to female nurses.

Apart from the usage of sex-neutral form, some authors try to fight the gender stereotypes by using a pronoun form which stands in contrast to social expectations. Most often it is the feminine forms which are used for supposedly male situations, like a prominent business figure or a person maintaining the car. Such usage of the feminine form is clearly a visibility strategy. Sometimes, however, the usage of the feminine, although intended as sex-neutral, might nevertheless be disadvantageous or insulting for women. I can easily imagine some women protesting against the image of a female slave in one of the examples I found in Cameron et al (1992: 20):

Is, say, *the happy slave's* account of her experience the final account of it?

To summarise, stereotyping still seems to play a role in governing pronoun choice, especially with very female or mostly male professions like nurses or lumberjacks. In some cases, however, the apparent stereotyping may be the result of the author's choice of the generic policy. Most often this is the case of authors who decide to use the masculine. Alternating pronoun forms can also lead to stereotyping: when the author, e.g. Tack (1992) uses *he or she* in reference to members of staff, but *he* - about people in top positions.

4.5 Can authors' pronoun choice be influenced by editorial policies?

Although it is debatable, if not impossible, to examine a possible influence of the publishers' policies on their authors, it may still be useful to look at the pronoun policies employed by authors who had the same publisher, and compare the preferences of editors and authors. However, not all publishing houses may have generic policies or impose them on their authors. Some publishing houses prepared antisexist guidelines already in the early 70s; Miller & Swift (1979: 158-9) quote McGraw-Hill's and Scott, Foresman & Company's guidelines for their authors and editors. At the same time, as reported by Schneider & Hacker (1973), most publishers might prefer to leave the decision to their authors.

It may be worth checking whether nowadays, with the increasing concern over sexism and Political Correctness, publishers decide to introduce antisexist policies and to what extent such policies could be binding for authors. I wrote a letter to the publishers asking whether they have any generic pronoun policy. The results of the publishers' survey are summarised in point a (see also Appendix 2 for copies of letters to and from editors).

I have not obtained the policies of all publishers whose books I included in the corpus; one reason for this is, not all of them answered my letter.

Moreover, I was not looking at publishers while I was deciding to include a given book into the corpus; date of publication, domain and the fact that the book employed generics were of much more importance. The result is that some publishing houses do not appear at all in my corpus or are represented by only one book. The examination of authors' and editors' policies (in point b) should therefore serve illustrative purposes only and is limited to discussion of publishers whose book(s) appear in my corpus and who are included in

publishers' survey (unless they are represented by two books or more in my corpus).

a) A survey among publishers

Out of thirteen publishing houses (whose editors answered my letter) only three, Chapman & Hall, Routledge and Prentice Hall, have official guidelines on the use of pronouns and one, Hodder & Stoughton, has a general policy of avoiding sexism in language (but "no firm editorial policy on the use of pronouns..."). In the majority of cases the choice of the pronoun to be used is left to the discretion of individual authors and editors.

Some editors suggest that the pronoun policy often depends on the type of the book being published, as was for instance explained by the editor from Cambridge University Press. The editor from Blackie Academic & Professional claims that they "publish high level professional and academic textbooks which generally avoid the use of personal pronouns, and therefore the question of generic pronoun usage does not often arise." The choice of pronouns might reflect the masculine or the feminine character of the field or the subject matter of the book. The letter from Churchill-Livingstone, which publishes mostly medical books, explains that:

Medicine is a male-dominated profession and it is rare to find a medic who is sensitive to the issue of sexist language. [...] certain medical conditions are inherently gender-specific, so that in obstetrics textbook the patient will obviously be 'she', and in discussing certain types of heart condition it is quite reasonable to use 'he'."

Martin Dunitz, another medical publishers, are also more inclined to use 'he' when referring to a 'clinician'. The editor from Edward Arnold, a division of Hodder & Stoughton, gives another example when the use of 'he' may be

justified – "in a book on Engine Technology ... since the main readership will be male City and Guilds students".

Although so few editorial houses have official guidelines, almost all editors who answered my queries were concerned about the conventions to be used to avoid sexism in language. Several publishers suggest inserting a note explaining the generic policy. Edward Arnold, for instance, usually adds a note stating that:

"The manuscript should be read in the understanding that, unless the contrary intention appears, words importing the masculine gender include the feminine and words importing the feminine gender include the masculine."

Similarly, Macmillan encourages authors "to explain in a Preface or a note when the first singular pronoun occurs which convention is going to be followed through the book." A note is also encouraged by Hodder & Stoughton, in the case when the authors use 'he' in one passage, and 'she' in another. Prentice Hall, which among other techniques of avoiding sexist bias lists alternating 'he and 'she', also suggests to the authors to include a note explaining usage.

Some publishers suggest pluralising to avoid the generic problem (Prentice Hall, Chapman & Hall, Macmillan), the use of 'you' or 'someone' (Harper Collins, Prentice Hall), the use of articles instead of possessive pronouns, or repeating the noun (Routledge).

Most publishers (eight publishers out of thirteen) have a preference for the 'they' form. The editor from Prentice Hall supplied me with the Guidelines for the representation of Women and Men in English Language Teaching Materials, where the suggestion to use 'they' as a singular pronoun is justified as follows:

Although this is considered incorrect by some people, it is common in spoken English and has a long history of use in written English (cf. William Caxton, 1470: 'Each of them should make themself ready.'; Shakespeare: 'God send everyone their heart's desire'). It is now becoming increasingly common in Britain in formal English (speeches, forms etc.), so use in EFL texts would reflect authentic usage. The major British grammar and usage books confirm this.

Harper Collins often uses 'they' in explaining entries in its COBUILD series.

This can be seen in some of the extracts from its catalogue, like:

A pawnbroker is a person who will lend you money if you give them something of your own.

If you pay off a debt, you give someone all the money that you owe them.'

Only one editor, from Macmillan, regards the use of 'they' as "ungrammatical".

'He or she' forms are usually regarded as "clumsy" (Hodder & Stoughton, Macmillan, Martin Dunitz) or "cumbersome" (Harper Collins) especially when it has to be repeated. The editor from Martin Dunitz points out that it is usually their female freelance editors who rigorously impose 'he or she' or 'they'. 'He or she' is used by Churchill Livingstone "where possible". Some other publishers employ this form in their notes for authors:

Please help the copy-editor by answering his/her queries and supplying any omissions he/she found with the time indicated by your sub-editor. (Chapman and Hall Guide for Authors, p. 7.)

Once the copy editor has finished work on the typescript he or she will send any queries to you. (Routledge Instructions for Authors, p. 27.)

Whereas the double pronoun construction is employed, and accepted (Prentice Hall) as a gender-neutral technique, the *s/he* form meets with much more severe criticism or even revulsion:

"I think s/he is an abomination!" (Martin Dunitz)

"Without exception, we all abhor the use of 's/he'..." (Churchill Livingstone)

"S/he' is ungainly." (Macmillan)

"(s)he is "clumsy" (Hodder & Stoughton)

Only Prentice Hall sometimes accepts *(s)he* especially in "rubrics of exercises where no other remedy is preferable and 'he or she' is too long". In the booklet "On Balance", which the editor from Prentice hall sent me, it is admitted that:

There are mixed views, and sometimes strong feelings, over the use of s/he; it is neat and economical in writing, but unpronounceable. There may be some argument for it, for instance, in teacher's books that are not meant to be spoken anyway.

Although not all publishing houses have official guidelines it seems that some of their editors are at least aware of the problem of sexist language and try to step in when they feel that a particular use of form may result in a sex bias.

b) A discussion of books in the corpus according to publishers

Edward Arnold, a division of Hodder & Stoughton is represented in my corpus by one book, Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1992). The two editors, from Hodder & Stoughton and Edward Arnold, express a preference for *they* or suggest including a note on pronoun usage. Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1992) decide on a different sex-neutral technique: they use invariably *he or she*.

Three authors, Blakemore (1992), Fasold (1990) and Weller (1992), e.g. two linguists and one economist, published in Blackwell. The editor from Blackwell suspects that most male authors prefer the masculine and Weller is the one, who could confirm this supposition. However, the other male author, Fasold, varies the pronoun usage, but as a linguist he is very much aware of the problem of sexism in language.

Two books, both on economics and both written by male authors, which were published in Butterworth-Heinemann reveal that the masculine policy was employed. Only the book written by a linguist and published in Focal Press (Bagnall 1993), an imprint of Butterworth-Heinemann, employs mostly sex-neutral forms.

Cambridge University Press does not have any particular pronoun policy for their authors, yet examples from all five CUP books in my corpus reveal that the authors (all men: Burton 1992; Cole 1992; Coleman 1992; Craven 1992; Kohli et al 1991) were aware of sexism in language. All of them employed sex-neutral techniques, using plural, double pronoun construction or alternating pronoun forms. It is noteworthy that four books belong to domains which are more sexist than others, namely, economics and law.

Two linguistic authors publishing in Longman, Holmes (1992) and Thomas (1991) differ in their pronoun policies. While Holmes, a woman author, employs sex-neutral techniques, Thomas, a man, uses only the masculine as a generic. Illingworth (1991) is the only representative of Churchill Livingstone, the Medical Division of Longman Group Ltd. Illingworth uses mostly the masculine and in doing so might confirm the editor's view that medics are rarely sensitive to the issues of sexist language.

Contrary to the views expressed by Churchill Livingstone's editor, six medical writers who publish in Oxford University Press seem to be sympathetic to the issues of sexism, as all, except Morton & Phillips (1992), employ sex-neutral forms as generics. Unfortunately, Oxford University Press has not answered my letter and therefore it is difficult to trace any possible influence of the editorial policy on the authors.

Prentice Hall (an imprint of Simon & Schuster) is represented only by one book by Kassarian & Robertson (1991), who employ sex-neutral forms. This agrees with the policy of the publishers who are concerned about avoiding sexist language in their publications and are one of few who have guidelines on this matter.

Nine of the books examined were published by Routledge: Baker (1992), Bury & Holme (1991), Cameron et al (1992), Douzinas et al (1991), Fowler (1991), Foxall (1990), Hodge & Kress (1993), Jenkins (1992), Milroy & Milroy (1991). Routledge books in my corpus include five books on linguistics, two from social sciences, one economics book and one book on law. All Routledge authors, except Milroy & Milroy (1991), employ sex-neutral techniques, especially the double pronoun construction, which is also employed by the publishers themselves in their *Instructions for Authors*.

Summarising both the editors' and authors' policies reveals that although most editors seem to be concerned about sexist language, they do not seem to be in a position to impose their views on the authors. Moreover, as most publishers do not have official guidelines, the editors might have expressed their own personal view, which can differ from the view of other editors working for the same publisher. This can be seen even in the fact that editors working in different divisions of the same publishing company, do not necessarily have the same opinions. The editor from Blackie International, which is an imprint of Chapman & Hall, does not even mention in his letter the guidelines from Chapman & Hall. The pronoun choice of some authors may also not always confirm the preferences of editors.

To trace possible influences on the authors might require further investigation. It may be necessary, for instance to write to a particular author

and particular copy-editor, who worked over one given book. At the same time it must be pointed out that the authors writing for the two publishing houses which have instructions for pronoun use, Routledge and Prentice Hall, seem to conform to the sex-neutral language editorial policies of their publishers.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of the findings

Both the sample of academic writing and a survey among the publishers reveal that there is an increased awareness of the problem of sexism in language among people professionally engaged in academic writing. The masculine generic is no longer universally used to mean "he or she" and many publishers as well as stylebook writers discourage its use. However, none of the other generic pronoun alternatives has got a general acceptance among writers or publishers, but rather several different pronoun forms are employed as generics even by one author. The pronouns used as generics are discussed in section 5.1.1.

Most authors choose several of the existing forms and alternate them even in one paragraph or sentence. Although mixing different pronoun forms is a major characteristics of today's generic pronoun usage, it should be pointed out that even before the increased interest over sexist language, the masculine had never been the only generic pronoun but was used alongside other forms, like *they* (particularly with indefinite pronouns) or *she* (with female-related antecedents like *nurse*). However, the results of my research show that the nature of the antecedent (whether it is a pronoun or a noun phrase, whether it is male-related, female-related or neutral noun) is not the only criterion

responsible for the variation. What seems to be important in the choice of a particular pronoun form is often the kind of reference to be made: e.g. generalisation or exemplification. This is discussed in more detail in section 5.1.2.

5.1.1 Pronoun forms used as generics

i) The masculine *he*

Despite criticisms of this form, the masculine form has not stopped being used as a generic. Out of fifty books in my sample, in thirty six there is at least one occurrence of *he*. However, only nine authors employ masculine generics as their only pronoun policy. Most other authors use it alongside other sex-indefinite forms; often with male-related antecedents like *ship captain* or *lumberjack*.

ii) The feminine *she*

The feminine form is employed as a generic much less frequently than the masculine. Although twenty one authors make use of this form, in the majority of cases the occurrence of this form does not exceed 30%. Only two authors use this form in more than 50% of pronoun occurrences. The feminine is the only gender-neutral pronoun form used only in one chapter in Craven (1992) and in one chapter in Cameron et al. (1992). These two books employ this form in any reference to a single noun phrase. Other authors usually employ *she*, when the referent is likely to be a woman. The feminine might reveal the sexual stereotypes, as is the case of a nurse or a secretary. It is also employed

when women are the usual referents of the subject matter discussed, according to the authors' experience. Such is the case of Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones (1992), who indicate that it is more often women than men who suffer from eating disorders. Also Bird (1993) uses *she* in reference to a parent with care (used by the authors in a legal sense), because it is usually mothers who are given care of their children after divorce.

iii) The neuter pronoun *it*

There are only two instances of the neuter pronoun *it* in my sample. Both are found in one book, Bird (1993), and refer to a child. However, this pronoun form is not used by the same author in all references about children, as the author uses the masculine as well (cf. examples [55] and [56] in the discussion). The neuter pronoun seems to be no longer used in generic references to human referents. The masculine seems to have taken over one of the roles of the neuter, namely a reference to a human referent, as it is used in more than 90% of references about children.

iv) Dual-gender pronoun

The dual-gender pronoun is the form most often employed by the authors in my sample. This stands in contrast to the results obtained by other researchers (e.g. Newman 1992, Sullivan 1983) where the plural was discovered to be most often in use. The reason for this discrepancy may be two-fold. Some authors, like Sullivan (1983), concentrated only on collecting examples with indefinite pronouns, which are often used with the plural form. Other authors, like

Newman (1992), collected examples from speech, where again the plural is commonly used as a generic (see Quirk et al 1985 or the preface to *The Collins-Cobuild English Language Dictionary* 1987: xx). Those researchers who asked students to fill in the gaps with pronouns might have obtained plural because the students often write as they speak, so their pronoun choice might have revealed the trend in spoken English. However, Khosroshahi (1989), for instance, observes that the dual-gender pronoun is often found in written English. In my sample the dual-gender pronoun is used by thirty five authors and thirteen of them use it in more than 50% of all their sex-indefinite pronoun references, but only six authors use it as their only policy.

The relatively high incidence of *he or she* might result mainly from the fact that it clearly indicates both genders. This form is a disjunctive phrase, which makes it a convenient means to refer to other disjunctive phrases. McConnell-Ginet (1979) notes the use of *he or she* in co-ordinate noun phrases where there are male and female disjuncts, like *a mother or father*. Out of six disjunctive phrases of that kind in my sample, five are used with the dual-gender pronoun (see e.g. example [117] and [183]) and one (example [223]) is used with the plural. However, one may wonder whether the usage of the dual-gender form in such disjunctive phrases is sex-neutral or rather sex-specific. *He or she* is clearly sex-neutral when used to refer to one person in generalisations about a doctor for instance; here, the antecedent *doctor* does not indicate sex and the form *he or she* indicates that doctors may be men as well as women. However, disjunctions like *mother or father*, are composed of gender-specific

antecedents; mothers are women and fathers are men. Thus the use of *he* or *she* directly reflects the gender of the antecedents: *mother (she)* or *father (he)*.

v) The plural *they*

The plural form *they* is used much less often than the dual-gender pronoun. Twenty two authors use this form in sex-indefinite situations. However, only, six employ the plural in more than 50% of their pronoun references. In most books (thirteen out of twenty two) *they* constitutes no more than 20% of sex-indefinite pronouns. Only in one book (Modell & Modell 1992) is the plural employed in all generic references.

The pronoun *they* is often said to be used only with indefinite pronouns. In my sample, thirty five instances of indefinite pronouns are referred to with *they*, while twenty six instances of indefinite pronouns are found with other pronoun forms. Yet it must be said that *they* is not restricted in usage to references to indefinite pronouns, but is used with other antecedents as well. As has been mentioned in the discussion (section 4.4.1), there are even more examples with the plural used in reference to singular noun phrases than with the indefinite pronouns. Only five authors employ this form only or mostly with the indefinite pronouns, while as many as fifteen use it only or mostly with singular noun phrases. It seems therefore, that plural can be found as a sex-neutral technique in written English extending beyond the area of indefinite pronouns where its use has been traditionally accepted.

5.1.2 Possible reasons for the variation of different pronoun forms

As it has already been mentioned, most authors who use third person singular pronoun references do not have a consistent pronoun policy: very few authors choose one particular pronoun form and employ it in all instances. Even some authors who make a statement of their policy often employ other forms as well (e.g. Houston & Lewis 1992; Blakemore 1992; Chadwick & Tadd 1992). Most authors vary their pronoun usage and use different forms side by side.

It must be noticed that some kinds of variation might be consistent. Several authors (Bird 1993, Craven 1992, Moore 1993) choose to alternate masculine and feminine pronouns using consistently one form with one particular antecedent (like the masculine in coreference with *absent parent* in Bird), or choosing one form in all references in one chapter, and the other form in another chapter (as in Craven).

Some authors (e.g. Meyers 1989 and 1990) have observed that switches from a dual-gender to a plural are so frequent that they might also be regarded as one consistent technique. Also many authors use the plural in reference to indefinite pronouns and other forms in reference to singular noun phrases.

Cameron et al (1992), for instance, in the introductory chapter uses the feminine in all cases but references to indefinite pronouns. My corpus shows also that some authors use forms like the plural or dual-gender pronouns in generalisations, but prefer to use single-gender forms, the masculine or the feminine, in exemplifications. Thus a choice of a given pronoun form or a variation in pronoun use may often be governed by other factors, such as the

nature of antecedent or context in which a given reference appears. Such factors, however, may be easily overlooked in strictly statistical analysis.

The statistical analysis might be helpful to indicate which pronoun forms are used in what quantities. Thus we may compare the number of occurrences of *he*, *she*, *they* or *he or she*. The problem remains that even the same pronoun form may be used with different meanings, which are not always easy to classify. A typical example might be the feminine form, which can be regarded as sexist when used with female-related antecedents (like *nurse*), but can also be non-sexist when used with neutral or male-related antecedents (like *individual*, or *business figure*). The masculine can also be difficult to classify as sexist or non-sexist when the authors include a note that *he* is used to mean "he or she"; the authors intend it as a gender-neutral form, but many readers can treat it as sexist (especially if they have not read the author(s)' note).

That the authors vary their pronouns might result from other influences, which will be discussed in the following subsections: like the nature of the antecedent, stylistic devices used in the context, or kind of reference.

a) Syntactic characteristics of the antecedent

The grammatical status of the antecedent is one factor which might influence the pronoun choice. Indefinite pronouns, for instance, are likely to be used with the plural form, and authors often employ the plural even if with other antecedents they consistently use a different form. It might also be expected that dual-gender forms would be found with disjunctive noun phrases. The

examples with indefinite pronouns and disjunctive phrases in my sample seem to confirm both these hypotheses. However, indefinite pronouns and disjunctive phrases are only a minor part of all the generic uses of *they* and *he* or *she* in my sample. More examples of that kind should be looked at to offer a more convincing proof for this hypothesis.

Another possible assumption is that the plural *they* is used with antecedents of notional plural meaning, like some indefinite pronouns, especially *everybody*, other pronoun forms like *each* or noun phrases with the modifier *each* or *every*. Although *they* is found with such antecedents, other pronoun forms are used as well. Thus, the notional plurality is not necessarily a decisive factor for choosing a plural pronoun form.

b) Stereotyping

The choice of a particular pronoun form can depend on the syntactical (as discussed in point a), as well as the semantic properties of the antecedent. Antecedents, like *teacher* or *secretary* are not marked for gender, but are interpreted as masculine or feminine, as they seem to reflect social stereotypes. Many authors still seem to be influenced by sexual stereotypes. Gender-laden antecedents, such as *miner* or *politician* are likely to be used with the masculine, while *nurse* is likely to be used with feminine. A typical case of stereotyping can be seen in example [46] (see chapter 4), where the boss is a man and a secretary is a woman. However, there are a few instances of pronoun usage which might be considered as counter-stereotyping. In example

[226] a local business figure is a woman. Sometimes such "counter-stereotyping" can be observed in books by authors who most probably do not intend it. The masculine is used, for instance in examples [163-5] (see chapter 4), where a child is engaged in occupations typically regarded as suitable for a little girl, like playing with dolls, or cooking, which works against stereotypes. However, the author (Illingworth 1991) uses the masculine in almost all his pronoun references. Similarly, the use of *he or she* in Tack (1992; see example [45]) in reference to a *telephone receptionist* is not necessarily non-sexist. Tack uses the masculine in most pronoun references and the reason why he decided to add "or she" in this particular reference might be that the masculine alone seemed unsuitable for a female-related profession.

The choice between the masculine and the feminine can often reflect real life statistics. Women are often teachers in primary schools, while men constitute the majority among academic teachers; hence the pronouns used in reference are feminine or masculine, respectively. A nurse in a gynaecological ward in more than 90% of cases may be a woman, while a nurse in institutions for the mentally ill is more likely to be a man. In my sample the nurse is almost always a "she", except for one example where it is a "s/he" (example [131]).

Another case when the pronoun choice reflects real life can be seen in examples [60] and [61], where the pronoun *he* used about the patient who suffers a coronary points out that it is usually men who have heart problems, and the pronoun *she* used in coreference with an older patient reflects the fact that an old patient is more likely to be a woman, as women live longer than

men. Statistics is mentioned as a factor by some authors in my sample (in their statements of generic policies) and the publishers I have surveyed. This can be seen in the notes of authors, like Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones (1992), who prefer the feminine because the cases of obesity and anorexia nervosa which they describe usually refer to women, or some editors, who use the masculine because they suspect that the majority of their readers are actually men.

c) References to other texts

As Treichler & Frank (1989: 236) observe: "Scholars commonly begin to echo the text they are writing about...". The authors often seem to be influenced by the original language of the documents analysed, as can be seen especially in legal handbooks in my sample. Vincenzi & Marrington (1992), for instance, seem to adopt the pronouns used in Immigration Law (cf. examples [94] and [95]), while Bird (1993) follows generally the pronoun usage of The Child Support Act (cf. examples [50] and [51]). While quoting requires retaining the original language (even if it can be regarded sexist), analysing the quotation or paraphrasing it can be done by means of sex-neutral language or the writer can indicate whether a particular quotation refers to both women and men (see e.g. Treichler & Frank 1989: 239-245). One of the authors examined in my sample, Elliot (1991; see example [195]), indicates that the masculine form used in the translation of Foucault does not reveal that a subject may assume masculine or feminine identity.

A slightly different problem arises when the author translates a text from a language which employs grammatical gender. The same author, Elliot (1991; see example [194]) translates from French a quotation from Lacan, where the antecedent *the psychoanalyst*, which is of masculine gender in French, is referred to with the masculine in the English translation. Lacan's use of masculine forms is addressed to by Treichler & Frank (1989: 240) in their *Guidelines for Nonsexist Usage*.

We would not advocate, say, changing Lacan's male pronouns to *elle* and translating it "she" as a linguistic form of feminist appropriation. Even adding [*or she*] after a *he* in Lacan would be highly questionable, because our taken-for-granted notions about sex and gender are precisely what he is often disputing.

Treichler & Frank are of the opinion that authors quoting a text which uses male generics should clarify the meaning of the generic without replacing masculine forms. Such clarification is made by some of the authors in my sample, which is analysed in section f) "Pronouns reflect reality".

d) The choice of stylistic devices in the context

Stylistic devices employed by authors may often govern the choice of pronoun form. *Man*, for instance, is usually used with a masculine pronoun in reference.

In example [47] Tack (1992) describes the case of an applicant who is to prove to the interviewer that *he is a man worth interviewing*. The use of the feminine form in the above quotation is rather improbable unless *a man* is changed for *a woman*. The question arises, however, whether *a man* is used by the author in sex-specific or sex-neutral sense, that is whether the author was

referring to one or both sexes. In this particular example the author might have used the neutral form *person* to clarify that his reference is neutral. However, this is not always possible, particularly if the author uses some well-known, almost clichéd phrases with *man*, e.g. *a man of letters* (although some authors attempt a form *woman of letters*¹).

Similarly the choice of some phrases which are associated with either men or women can govern the choice of the pronoun reference. An adjective, like "masculine" describing the referent, or a mention of a referent's wife, may rule out the possibility of using any gender-neutral pronoun form reference about the referent. The use of the masculine in the following examples, which I have collected is hardly surprising:

- 1) For instance, one person may like Marlboro cigarettes because they taste good, while *another person* may like Marlboro cigarettes because smoking them makes *him* more **masculine**. (Kassarjian & Robertson 1991: 328)
- 2) Consider, for example, *a driver* who approaches an intersection at 3:00 a.m. as *he* is taking ***his pregnant wife***, whose labor has begun, to hospital? (Benjamin & Curtis 1992: 10)
- 3) If *a peasant or farmer* lived long enough to see *his* children married, *he* might make a retirement contract with *his* heir, transferring the farm or rights of tenancy in the seigniorial system in return for lifelong maintenance for *himself* and ***his wife***. (Cole 1992: 12)

¹ In my previous research (Ozieblowska 1991: 44) I have found the following example: "Knowledge about Latin, which nobody has spoken for centuries, was essential for *anyone* presuming to call *himself* a man of letters" (There were, in those days, no - or hardly any "women of letters").

However, the use of the stylistic devices and the masculine form as a generic, seems to limit the generic reference to men only and can be regarded as sex-specific. Such examples are not taken into account in the analysis of the results of my research. They can, however, prove that authors often think generically but about men.

Although the masculine can refer to a generic antecedent, there are instances where this form is not appropriate and there is a need to resort to a different form. The following example employs a variety of pronoun forms:

- 4) . . . *a 'settled' person* may be deported from the United Kingdom if: (a) *his* continued residence . . . (b) *she* is the wife or child (c) *s/he* is convicted of an imprisonable offence. (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 5)

Vincenzi & Marrington usually use a masculine form as a generic – here however, the authors introduce two other forms. The reference of the feminine pronoun to a wife is conditional, but it is not clear why *a child* is also referred to with the same pronoun. It is rather implausible to suggest that the authors meant only a female child. The use of *s/he* in point (c) seems to clarify that the case may pertain to both sexes. It might also suggest that the authors no longer regarded the masculine and/or the feminine as generic forms referring to both sexes, if they finally resorted to the neutral form *s/he*.

In some cases the use of the single-gender pronoun in the possessive case can seem to limit the reference to one sex only. The possessive masculine adjective seems especially difficult to be employed with a noun like *spouse*, as that could limit the interpretation of a neutral spouse to wives only. In my sample (see

examples [51] and [225] in chapter 4), the authors decide to use the dual-gender possessive *his or her*.

Apart from nouns or adjectives, also the choice of verbs may suggest a sex-specific interpretation. This seems to be the case in a following example referring to person Z:

- 5) Z exposed *his* person to *his* landlady in *his* rented room?
(Nerhot 1990: 14)

Although no mention is made that Z was actually a man, "exposing" is an act typical of men (exhibitionists) and a woman is rather unlikely to expose "*his* person".

e) Projecting one's own sex

The pronoun choice may often depend on the sex of the author. I have not observed any particular correlation between the authors' sex and their pronoun policy. Male as well as female authors use the masculine as a generic, and because most authors in my sample use gender-neutral language and most of them are men, then the hypothesis that it is male authors who mostly use the masculine is unfounded. However, what can be observed is that the author's sex may determine the choice of a generic, when the class of generic representatives includes the author, or the generic statement is a generalisations based on the author's experience. I noted several cases of that kind in my previous research (Ozieblowska 1991: 96), e.g. in the following statement from *The European*.

- 6) It is sad for *a Yugoslav* to read in a newspaper that the country *he* comes from is "artificial". (*The European* 15-17 Feb. 1991)

The author of this statement is a man who clearly refers to his own feelings. Similar examples can be found in the present research. Burton (1992: see example [70]) declares that an author should clarify "the nature of his projects [...] at the outset". This is precisely what Burton himself does in the preface to his book. Thus speaking of a generic author, Burton speaks also of himself. A similar example can be seen in Coleman (1992; see example [80]), who states that everybody should have the kind of supervisor he had.

f) Pronouns reflect reality

Some authors realise that single-gender pronouns, especially the masculine, might be confusing and explain the reference they make. Cole (1991), for instance, indicates whether he means one or both sexes, as could be seen in example [220]. There is also an example, where Cole points to the fact that only men could be those dreamers in the quest for eternal bliss.

- 7) *The dreamer's* quest for eternal bliss generally led *him* (**not her**) through two stages: a struggle against vice and worldly temptations, and "then, a more positive journey in which *he*, with superior counsel and aid progresses from strength to strength". (Cole 1991: 13)

In the example above, Cole uses the masculine form, but makes it clear that it refers to men only, to "him (not her)". Another author in my sample, Jenkins (1992), seems to be very methodical about his use of pronoun forms, and using the masculine to discuss the French Academic, he makes it clear that the choice of the pronoun form reflects the fact that most French Academics are men:

- 8) *The French Academic* is no different in this respect, to the Kabyle peasant in the urgency and subtlety of *his* pursuit of honour (**and, yes, it usually is a "him"**). (Jenkins 1992: 158)

In this example, Jenkins deliberately uses the masculine form to indicate that his referent is usually a man (incidentally, a peasant, to whom Jenkins compares the French Academic, is also usually male-related).

Another instance where pronouns reflect reality can be seen in examples which describe particular real-life cases. Dual-gender pronoun is, for instance, a convenient means to refer to a mixed-sex group of people. If a researcher describes an experiment or a survey conducted among a mixed-sex group, then the usage of *he or she* underlines the fact that a participant can be a man as well as a woman. This can be illustrated by several examples from my sample; e.g. Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1992; see example [214]) describe specific participants of a parade; Baron et al (1992; see examples [184] and [190]) discuss subjects in a particular experiment; Kassarian & Robertson (1991; see examples [29] and [30]), mention specific consumers and customers in the survey.

g) Kind of reference: generalisations and exemplifications

Both kind of references refer to hypothetical individuals, but exemplification differs from generalisation in the concreteness of the image: the referent is presented in such detail, and in so concrete a situation that the reader can easily imagine this particular referent as a real person. Example [205] of the corpus (see chapter 4) about a person visualising "himself" slamming the door can be an instance of exemplification, as the reader can visualise one person slamming the door. In contrast, generalisations, which, as the name implies, refer to

people in general, are less likely to produce a one-person image in people's minds.

The choice of the pronouns used in generalisations and exemplifications found in my sample seems to reflect the nature of these two kinds of reference.

While in generalisations, *they* or dual-gender pronouns are used fairly often, in exemplifications authors are more inclined to use single-gender forms.

5.2 The picture of the generic phenomenon in the light of the findings

Most scholars discussing the generic refer to it as if it were a clear-cut case; reference to a person who can be of either sex. However, there are a lot of examples which can be difficult to classify. Although the context can often be helpful, yet it may not necessarily solve all the dilemmas. In Hodge & Kress (1993) the masculine pronoun is used three times in the following example about a 3-year-old child:

- 9) Take, for example, *a 3-year-old child's* characterisation of a very steep hill *he* is attempting to climb as "a heavy hill".
(Hodge & Kress 1993: 205)

The context of this example does not give any indication whether it was an exemplification about a hypothetical child, or a reference to an unnamed male child, known to the authors.

Even looking at the authors general generic policy does not always give information about the nature of pronoun reference being made. A sudden change in pronoun usage of an author who otherwise has a consistent generic policy, may imply that a different kind of reference is being made.

Distinguishing between a generic reference and a reference to a specific individual (which is analysed further in section 5.2.1) is only one area of difficulty. Another problem is distinguishing whether the author who uses single-gender pronoun forms, masculine or feminine, refers to all human species or one sex (see section 5.2.2).

5.2.1 Is the reference made to a generic or to a specific person?

What can often be observed in studying examples in context is that generic statements are often illustrated with specific references to particular persons. Thomas (1991), for instance uses the masculine when he talks about a purist, but at the same time, all purists mentioned, for instance, in Chapter 6 of his book are men. There is also an example where Thomas discusses an image of a purist, and then illustrates it with a specific example of a man purist:

10) More often, however, the image of a purist is that of *the scholar* working away quietly in *his* study surrounded by massive dictionaries attempting – sometimes in vain – to find an equivalent in *his* native tongue for a word in a foreign text that *he* needs to translate. **Such a man was the Czech reformer Josef Jungman, . . .** (Thomas 1991: 103)

In law books especially, it is sometimes unclear whether the reference is made to a generic or specific person. Because of the nature of the British law, the verdict issued in a case of one particular person might apply to any person committing a similar offence or crime. In some instances a deviation from the author's typical pronoun usage might suggest that a reference is specific. This is probably the case in Vincenzi & Marrington (1992), who generally use the masculine, but have two examples with the feminine form, as in the following

example about an illegal immigrant, where the authors discuss the case of Uche (1991):

- 11) Thus *a passenger* who, by concealing *her* desire to remain permanently in the U.K. obtained leave to enter as a visitor was an illegal entrant (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 20)

That the use of the feminine in the above example is probably specific rather than generic might be proved by the fact that the authors use a past tense, and also that, generalising the definition of an illegal entrant, they change the pronoun form to the masculine, which is their main generic policy:

- 12). . . *a person* is only an illegal entrant if at the time of entry *he* conceals *his* true intentions. (Vincenzi & Marrington 1992: 20)

However, some of the pronoun references from law books in my sample are much more difficult to interpret as only generic or specific. Delmas-Marty (1992; see examples [84-87] in Chapter 4) uses only masculine forms; however, in the cases she mentions men were the litigants. Thus, it is not clear whether the masculine forms employed in Delmas-Marty refer to any politician or journalist, or only to the specific politician and journalists mentioned in the illustrative cases.

Some examples seem to be both specific and generic, as can be seen in Blackburn (1993; see example [59] in Chapter 4) who explains Britain's electoral system on the basis of real-life election result. Thus the person who wins elections is both a generic Member of Parliament, as well as a specific male person, whose winning number of votes is quoted. This double, generic and specific, nature of the antecedent is underlined by the variation in the pronoun references; both masculine and dual-gender forms are used.

5.2.2 Is the reference gender-neutral or gender-specific?

The choice of certain stylistic devices may make it unclear whether gender-neutral or gender-specific reference is made. The use of *man* is one of such cases; *man* is confusing because of its double meaning of "human being" and "male human being". However, the use of more neutral antecedents, like *person* or *driver*, does not guarantee the neutrality of the whole statement, as the example above about a person who likes Marlboro cigarettes shows (see example 1 in point d)). This example refers to anybody who likes Marlboro cigarettes, but as *the person* in the first half of the sentence is definitely generic, *the person* in the second part who wants to be more "masculine" is more likely to be a man.

Sometimes distinguishing between gender-neutral and gender-specific references requires some knowledge on the part of the reader/text analyst. As mentioned earlier, in some scientific fields, especially analysing the past, the generic representative of a class could only be a man. Reader's general knowledge can also be necessary when the author uses consistently the same pronoun form, in which way a specific reference is not specially signalled by a different pronoun form. Anthias (1992), for instance, uses the masculine in all her examples (see e.g. examples [210] and [211]). Also the following example about the constitution of Cyprus employs this form:

- 13) The President was always "Greek" and the Vice-President "Turk" *each* elected by *his* own community, deriving *their* authority from each and responsible and accountable to them. (Anthias 1992: 47)

Anthias makes a generic reference to the country's President and Vice-President. However, the masculine form is most probably male-specific, because all Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Cyprus were men. The use of the plural pronoun in "their authority" is also ambiguous. If "their" means "the President's and Vice-Presidents", why then "each [is] elected by *his* own community" and not "*their* community"?

However, as Treichler & Frank (1989) suggest, the author should check the "exclusive maleness" in the field under discussion. In my former study (Ozieblowska 1991: 47) I have come across an author who used masculine references to poets in the antiquity and dual-gender forms about romantic poets. Such pronoun usage might suggest that women poets appeared only since the Romantic period. However, there were women poets even in the antiquity, to mention Sappho at least.

As can be seen from the above example pronoun usage can be particularly misleading where single-gender pronouns appear among sex-neutral generic forms, used by one author. Several more ambiguous examples of that kind can be observed in my present study. Reading about Freud's patients in Elliot (1991; see example [193]) the reader may not know whether the use of the feminine form means that all Freud's patients were women. Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1992), for instance, use the dual-gender pronoun as a generic. However, when they discuss Milgram's obedience studies they employ the masculine. Incidentally, the same studies by Milgram are also quoted by Baron et al. (1992). Here also the masculine form is used, although Baron et al employ

different generic forms in other examples. The use of the masculine to discuss the same referents in both cases might suggest that most probably the subjects in Milgram's obedience studies were men. I checked Milgram's book² and discovered that the original experiment was with men only, although later women also participated (Milgram, himself, however, mentions that women participated only in few experiments). Thus, both Baron et al. and Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias probably refer to the original experiment with only men participating, and therefore the masculine is used in specific reference to men.

5.3 The uses of the sex-indefinite forms

5.3.1 References to hypothetical non-specific referents

a) Generalisations

This is a classic generic statement where a referent is a representative of a whole class. Thus, discussing for instance the duties of "a doctor", we do not mean "one doctor" but "all doctors". Some antecedents found in generalisations underline the fact that the reference is made to all class: *everybody*, *anybody*, *every person*, or *each* clearly indicate that the reference is made to more than one person. Generalisations are in a particular need for the gender-neutral pronoun to make clear that the reference is made to all classes – men and

² Milgram, S. (1974). *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*. New York: Harper and Row.

women. The generalisations found in my corpus are often found with *they* and *he or she*.

Generalisations constitute a great majority of the instances of generic references in my sample. Typical generalisations can be compared to statements of general truth or conclusions from empirical studies, which inform, for instance, that the kind of language reveals a lot about the author (example [209]), or explain figures or graphs (examples [85] and [186]). Some generalisations, e.g. examples [51], [57], [145], sound like regulations, which state everybody's legal rights or obligations. Others are like definitions, e.g. example [97] presents a definition of a British citizen, example [134] defines a purist, example [135] describes a person who has bulimia nervosa. Still other generalisations refer to social norms or conventions, for instance the rules of addressing people (example [116]), or that everybody should keep promises (example [110]).

b) Exemplifications

Although exemplifications, like generalisations, do not refer to specific people, but to hypothetical individuals, these individuals are presented so vividly or in such concrete situations that the reader can easily visualise them.

Exemplifications present images of people in particular situations: a manager who dictates a 'get-lost' letter to the secretary who afterwards informs all members of staff about it (example [46]), or a person who is playing checkers and is not always sure how to plan the next move (example [138]).

Exemplifications may often sound like advice in particular cases: for instance what to do "if the unit is closed when the patient suffers his coronary" (example [60]), or how to tell whether the witness is telling the truth (example [93]). Thus, the referent in exemplifications is not just "everybody", but a particular, although imaginary person. This person may be "a particular energetic and charismatic leader, who attempts to lead the staff into change" (example [177]), a "member of a social club with a long tradition of republican political attachments" (example [213]), or a person who may have difficulty finding a job because of "his use of language" (example [133]).

While generalisations, are according to my data more likely to contain nonsexist forms, especially *he or she*, exemplifications are usually found with single-gender pronouns, as if to indicate that a referent, who is visualised as one person, is a male or a female.

5.3.2 References to specific individuals

a) The referent's sex is not known

Sex-indefinite forms might be used in examples where the reference is made to one specific referent and we just do not know the sex. In my sample, Baker (1992; example [107]) and Hodge & Kress (1993; example [129]) use the dual-gender forms in reference to particular individuals, that is the translator of the text examined by Baker and the author of the fax analysed by Hodge & Kress. In both cases the authors do not seem to know the sex of the particular referents. However, another author who makes a reference to a particular

anonymous individual decides to use the masculine; Coleman (1992; see example [79]) who writes about a person who stole his original manuscript seems almost to visualise the culprit as a man.

It seems that nonsexist pronouns, especially *he or she*, can be useful in the instances when the writer does not know the sex of the referent. There is 50 % probability that the specific referent is a man, or that it is a woman, thus using *he or she* the writer is covering all the possibilities.

b) The person's sex is ambiguous

A gender-neutral form might be employed when again the referent is a specific person, but the sex of that person is ambiguous. Some scholars list here the case of transsexuals or fictitious androgynous literary characters, who are sometimes referred to as *he/she* (see Treichler & Frank 1989 or Dubois & Crouch 1987). My sample does not contain such examples. Although one author (Delmas-Marty 1992) does discuss a few court cases referring to transsexuals, the pronoun usage does not seem to be gender-neutral but refer to the person's sex after transformation, even if it refers to this person before transformation had taken place. Thus, Delmas-Marty quotes a person, who at birth was recorded as a female and after treatment "he became a male" (1992: 94), although technically it should have been "she became a male". It is interesting to note that despite being referred to as "he", this person has been denied by the court the prefix "Mr". However, there is one example in my

sample, where the dual- gender form is used to underline the person's mental problem concerning sex (example [196]).

c) A reference to a/each person who is a representative of a particular real-case group

Another specific reference where a gender-neutral form might be employed is in statements about somebody coming from a group of people, who might or actually are mixed-sex. In my sample, this can be a reference to people who take part in the experiments described by different researchers (examples [184], [190], or [214]) or to the [real] friends of one of the authors, whom he thanks for their help and support (example [78]). The typical form of the antecedent in such cases is "*each/every* + Noun": thus the statement in a way refers to all members of the group. The form which is most often used by authors in these cases is the dual-gender form.

5.4 Implications of the findings

Studying examples in context can bring a lot of valuable language data for linguistic analysis. Looking at real-language examples can point out the contexts where a need for gender-neutral forms arises. The analysis of my corpus may give some indications about the pronoun forms used in sex-neutral contexts in Present-Day English. At the same time it reveals different factors which might influence the choice of given forms. Although factors like stereotyping can still play a role in classifying a given antecedent as gender-specific and choosing a gender-specific pronoun form in coreference, other

factors seem to be much important as well. The results of my research, however, may not satisfy the people whose major concern is in the ideological stance and who are mostly interested to see whether the language becomes less sexist, or those who are looking for a prescription as to what forms should be used. The majority of the authors in my sample use non-sexist language; however, it is no longer clear whether ideology is the only factor influencing such usage. Many authors may avoid the masculine not because they think it is a sexist form, but because it is potentially ambiguous. Moreover looking at the usage suggests that the masculine is still likely to be used, alongside the feminine, in exemplifications. The variety of forms employed by writers does not give a clear and decisive answer as to which form is going to be universally used as a gender-neutral form. A close look at the examples suggests that the choice of a pronoun depends on many factors and each of the proposed alternatives for gender-neutral forms has a role to play.

Pronouns are not just meaningless substitutes for nouns phrases: they add a meaning of their own. On the one hand, feminists would claim that a given pronoun choice reflects the speaker/writer's ideology. As Cameron (1994: 26) expressed it: "Clearly the adoption of non-sexist language conveys a message about the speaker's political sympathies, but so does the retention of traditional language." Using sex-neutral forms aims at giving equal rights to both sexes. It is supposed to fight with social stereotypes, especially those connected with different professions. On the other hand, pronouns can also reveal the truth

about reality. On occasions authors use a given pronoun form because it reflects reality in one hundred per cent or in the majority of cases.

5.4.1 Gradience of genericity?

As can be seen in the above discussion, the sex-indefinite pronoun problem has a range of different uses and it is not always easy to distinguish between one kind of reference and another. When I was collecting examples for my database I often found them difficult to classify. Most authors do not mention such difficulties and do not seem to notice the fuzzy boundary between the generic and the specific, or sex-neutral and sex-specific.

There are references which are both generic and specific. The reference can be made about a hypothetical or a real person, but also about a hypothetical person illustrated by a real person (see Figure 3, p. 240). Also analysing pronouns used in the sex-indefinite sense can show that one and the same pronoun, like the masculine, may be used with a different degree of genericity. Between the sex-indefinite *he* and sex-specific *he*, there is a range of uses, where the masculine can refer to a representative of a class where men constitute the majority. This is the case when the masculine is used with male-related referents, e.g. members of a board of directors, politicians, lumberjacks, or masons. The same can be said about the feminine, but even the neutral *he or she* is not always clearly generic. As has been mentioned in section 5.1.1 point iv, the dual-gender form used in coreference with disjunctions, like *father or mother*, functions more in a sex-specific rather than sex-indefinite sense, reflecting the fact that *father* is masculine, and *mother* is feminine.

Another fuzzy boundary can be observed in trying to establish when a given specific group becomes a generic group. A specific group may be, for instance, a few colleagues of Coleman, it may be a group of twenty research subjects or even hundreds of surveyed consumers. Each such group is composed of men and women and is finite as to number; writers describing these groups know exactly how big these specific groups are and what is the percentage of each sex in a given group. However, a generic group of people is also to some extent limited and, in the case of the sex-indefinite generic, it is a mixed-sex group as well. Even when authors refer to a generic group of doctors, there is a certain limited number of people who are doctors; moreover, there is a certain limited number of people living on Earth, who are, needless to say, men as well as women.

Deciding whether a group is generic or specific does not seem to depend on the number of people in a group. What matters might be knowing the group in question and being able to identify the members of that group. In my own case, I can make statements about a group of writers in general, but I can say much more about the group of writers whose books I examined – I can list their names or their pronoun policies, for instance; in other words, I know this particular group of writers and I can make a list of them in one of my appendices.

References to writers in general, and the writers whose generic policies were examined can illustrate two almost opposite ends on the generic-specific scale. The problem may arise when the reference is made, for instance, to *each*

academic at Glasgow University. The referent is not an abstract entity: there is Glasgow University in Scotland, and there is a certain number of academics who are employed there. However, can writers or readers, even those who work at Glasgow University, know as much *about each academic at Glasgow University*, as they do about *each academic at their department*? Although it is possible to obtain information about academics employed at Glasgow University, this information is not readily available. Whether familiarity with the group or readily accessible information about the group are the only factors determining about the generic/specific boundary is a matter which needs more data and more examination. However, looking at the examples in this corpus can suggest the existence of gradience of genericity, which can be illustrated in Figure 3, p. 240.

5.4.2 Is generics in English only a problem of sexist language?

The discussion about non-sexist language in the seventies started with most researchers calling for a sex-neutral, non-discriminatory pronoun form. The sex-neutral pronoun was needed to substitute the masculine form (and also the feminine form) whose use reflected and promoted social stereotyping. Twenty years later the need for a sex-neutral form is even more urgent than ever. This need can be justified by a concern about non-sexist language on the one hand, and the care for the clarity of communication, on the other. Consciousness-raising about the issue has not led to the elimination of the use of the masculine, but made the authors aware that this form is not universally understood or accepted as a form of reference to men as well as women. For

the sake of clarity and accuracy of information, it seems important to distinguish whether a reference is made to one sex or both. The readers of history books, for instance, might wish to know whether a given situation concerned only men or both sexes, without tracing other books to find out the fact. That the masculine is no longer understood as generic in the sense that it can refer to both women and men, can be seen by the fact that the authors using this form often explain the meaning of the pronoun indicating when this form is not sex-indefinite but means only men. Some of them (e.g. Houston & Lewis 1992) include a note in the preface, explaining that they are referring to both sexes. It is interesting to note that it is not only the masculine which, in view of some authors, needs explanation, but also the other single-gender pronoun – *she* (see Abraham & Llewellyn-Jones's 1992 note in Appendix 1, p. 218).

Single-gender pronouns are more likely to be ambiguous because of their double, generic and sex-specific function. The sex-specific function seems to be the dominating one. Reference to men or women has been the primary use of single-gender pronouns, and this use seems to be retained even in some of the generic statements, like exemplifications.

5.5 Implications for future research

Generic pronouns in English is a phenomenon which although much publicised does not seem to have been fully explored. Further study on this subject can still offer some unexpected results. More data is necessary to study in detail some of the cases discussed in this dissertation, especially gradience of

genericity or exemplifications. It might also be useful to look at sex-neutral usage in a greater variety of language domains. Academic writing itself is still an open chapter. The use of generics in literature (novels, and especially criminal stories) needs a thorough exploration. It is also worth looking into sources which are less refined, but more accessible to all ordinary users of a language, like leaflets, posters etc. More research is needed particularly in the mode of spoken language, which is said to be more resistant to change.

Although some research has been done on the language of television programmes (Newman 1992), television and radio, as well as other media, are often heavily edited, and thus cannot be the source of spontaneous speech. The area of generics illustrates language under transition, and therefore there is a constant need for more and more updated language data.

Another important area of study are all non-sexist generic policies. The results of this research suggest that pluralizing may be a commonly employed technique. Comparing the number of third-person pronoun references shows a wide range between the highest and lowest number of pronoun references employed by different authors. Incidentally, authors who have more than ninety examples are those whose main or only pronoun policy is the use of the masculine, while authors who have very few examples (up to ten) prefer non-sexist forms. This might indicate that the authors who decide to use non-sexist forms, at the same time try to use as few pronoun references as possible. A possible hypothesis, is that one generic policy of these authors is trying to avoid third person singular generic pronouns. Therefore collecting plural as well as

singular pronoun references might give extra information about the authors' sex-neutral policies.

To summarise, there is a need to collect a huge detailed and varied corpus of current generic usage, which might provide material to study generics in different domains, the change in generics, as well as the nature of all pronouns and pronoun references in particular.

5.6 Summary

The variety of pronoun forms employed by different authors, might suggest that there is an apparent chaos in generic references, or as Dubois & Crouch (1987) called it - "linguistic disruption". However, looking at real language examples in detail can reveal an emerging pattern of pronoun choice, which depends on factors like the immediate context or the degree of genericity.

Gradience of genericity might explain why some examples are difficult to classify as generic or specific. However, authors writing on the subject of the generic have generally not made clear the difficulties in collecting data. Third-person singular pronoun references to people of an unidentified sex is not only a matter of users consciously choosing between sexist and nonsexist forms.

This study indicates that the area of generic pronoun references in English is a complex linguistic phenomenon, which needs further investigation.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF BOOKS AND CHAPTERS CHECKED*

I Economics

- 1) Bryce, Lee. 1991. *The Influential Manager*. London: Piatkus.
 - Ch 1. There are many ways of being influential. pp. 1-14.
 - Ch 2. What is power? pp. 15-31.
 - Ch 3. What is influence? pp. 32-54.
- 2) Craven, John 1992 *Social Choice: A Framework for Folljective Decisions and Individual Judgements*. Cambridge: CUP.
 - Preface. pp. ix-x.
 - Ch. 1. Introduction. pp. 1-11.
 - Ch. 2. Preference and choice. pp. 13-28.
 - Ch. 3. Arrow's theorem. pp. 29-49.
- 3) Foxall, Gordon R. 1990. *Consumer Psychology in Behavioural Perspective*. London: Routledge.
 - Acknowledgements. p. x
 - Introduction. pp. 1-6.
 - Ch. 1. The cognitive consumer - and beyond. pp. 7-30.
 - Ch. 2. The experimental analysis of behaviour. pp. 31-54.
- 4) Houston, William and Nigel Lewis. 1992. *The Independent Director*. Oxford: Butterworth- Heinemann
 - Foreword. pp. vii-viii.
 - Preface. pp. ix-xiii.
 - Ch. 1. Becoming an independent director. pp. 3-7.
 - Ch. 3. Contrasting roles in large and small companies. pp. 19-28.
 - Ch. 4. Independent director recruitment. pp. 31-46.
 - Ch. 5. The appointment process. pp. 47-56.
 - Ch. 6. Essential checks when joining a board (due diligence). pp. 57-68.

* The names of authors are given in full (when known), so that the authors' sex can be examined. Quotations from different authors keep the original wording and fonts.

NOTE: The authors include a note on pronoun policy:

Throughout this book, a director is referred to as 'he' rather than 'he or she' for the sake of brevity and convenience, despite the undoubted fact that there is a growing number of highly competent and well-qualified women being appointed to boards. It is hoped this book will prove equally useful to both sexes, and will help their particular skills and abilities to be used to the full.

I checked whether antecedents other than director are used, as well as whether only the masculine form is used as a generic. Most examples referred to *a director*, even if other terms, like *member of board*, or *candidate* were used. There were, however, other referents, like interviewer or shareholder. Moreover, there were also a few examples where pronoun other than masculine was used. I therefore decided to include all examples in the corpus.

5) Kassarian, Harold H. and Thomas S. Robertson. 1991. *Perspectives in Consumer Behaviour*. (4th ed.) Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

- Preface. pp. vii-viii.
- Ch. 1. Shopping for appliances: consumer strategies and patterns of information search. (by William L. Willie and Peter R. Dockson, based on a paper from 1985). pp. 1-26.
- Ch. 16. Personality and consumer behaviour: an update. (by Harold H. Kassarian and Mary Jane Sheffet, prepared especially for this volume). pp. 281-303.
- Ch. 18. The role of attitude theory in marketing. (by Richard J. Lutz, written especially for this volume). pp. 317-339.

6) Kohli, Martin, Rein, Martin, Guillemard, Anne-Marie and Herman van Gunsteren. 1991. *Time for Retirement*. Cambridge: CUP.

- Acknowledgement. p.viii.
- Ch. 1. The changing balance of work and retirement. (by Martin Kohli and Martin Rein). pp. 1-35.
- Ch. 2. The evolution of early exit: A comparative analysis of labor force participation pattern. (by Klaus Jacobs, Martin Kohli and Martin Rein). pp. 36-66.

7) OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

Social Policy Studies. No. 9. "Private pensions and public policy." 1992.

- Foreword. p. 3
- Ch. 1. Changing the mix of public and private pensions: the issues. (by Elizabeth Duskin). pp. 7-20.
- Ch. 6. Government regulation: enhancing the equity, adequacy, and security of private pensions. (by Nancy Altman). pp. 77-95.

- Ch. 7. Financing administration and portfolio management: how secure is the pension promise? (by Jean Frijns and Carel Petersen). pp. 97-114.
 - Ch. 8. The economic effects of private pensions. (by James E. Pesandro). pp 115-133.
- 8) Pepper, Allan D. 1992. *Managing the Training and Development Function*. (2nd ed). London: Gower.
- Preface. pp. viii-ix.
 - Introduction. pp. x-xiii.
 - Ch. 1. Some definitions. pp. 3-8.
 - Ch. 2. Policies and practices. pp. 9-13.
 - Ch. 3. Intention and objectives. pp. 14- 19.
 - Ch. 4. Training opportunity. pp. 20-29.
 - Ch. 5. The training opportunity matrix. pp. 30-35.
 - Ch. 6. Notifiable training. pp. 36-41.
 - Ch. 7. Non-notifiable training. pp. 42-53.
- 9) Tack, Alfred. 1992. *Profitable Customer Care*. London: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Ch. 1. Have a nice day. pp. 1-5.
 - Ch. 2. Finding quality people. pp. 6-38.
 - Ch. 3. Motivating people to care. pp. 39-48.
- 10) Weller, Paul. 1992. *The Theory of Futures Markets*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Preface.
 - Introduction. pp. 1-12.
 - Ch. 1. An introduction to the theory of hedging and speculation in futures markets. (by Paul Weller and Makoto Yano). pp. 15-35.
 - Ch. 2. Futures markets and risk reduction. (by David M. G. Newbery and Joseph E. Stiglitz). pp. 36-55.

II Law

- 1) Bird, Roger. 1993. *Child Maintenance. The Child Support Act 1991*. (2nd ed.) Bristol: Family Law.
- Foreword. (by Stephen Cretney) p. v.
 - Preface. p. vii.
 - Ch. 1. The law before the Child Support Act 1991. pp. 1-15.
 - Ch. 4. Procedures for obtaining assessment. pp. 41-76.
- 2) Blackburn, Robert. (ed.) 1993. *Rights of Citizenship*. London: Mansell Publishing Limited. (A Cassell Imprint).
- Introduction: citizenship today. (by R. Blackburn) pp. 1-11.
 - Ch. 3. Rights and health care. (by Margaret Brazier) pp. 56-74.

- Ch. 4. The right to vote. (by R. Blackburn). pp. 75-98.
- 3) Burton, Steven J. 1992. *Judging in Good Faith*. Cambridge: CUP.
 - Preface. pp. xi-xviii.
 - Ch. 1. Stubborn indeterminacy. pp. 3-34.
 - Ch. 2. The good faith thesis.
 - a) 2.1. Judicial duty. pp. 35-37;
 - b) 2.2. Judicial discretion. pp. 37-50.

Note: The author does not make any statement about his pronoun policy, but discusses sexist language as an illustration of the contrast between what is said and the rhetoric in which it is said:

... consider a use of sexist language: "Any person should be sober when he drives a car." The use of the male pronoun has a negative effect on some women, who feel distracted, excluded, neglected, or offended by such a statement. The effect stems from the rhetoric: *how we speak*, not *what is said*. It should be clear, because of an inherited linguistic convention and the absurdity of alternative interpretations, that the speaker is saying that anyone should be sober when she or he drives a car. There are times when it is appropriate to focus on the rhetoric, which may reflect background cultural attitudes deserving of change. But something important is left out if we focus only on how we speak while neglecting what is said. For example, a motorist in most circumstances would better attend to the relationship between sobriety and driving than the gender of the pronouns in the warning. (pp. 25-26)

- 4) Catalano, Joseph T. 1991. *Ethical and Legal Aspects of Nursing. A Study and Learning Tool*. Springhouse: Springhouse Corporation.
 - Section I. Overview of ethics and law in nursing.
 - Section II. Ethical theories. pp. 13-17.
 - Section III. Ethical decision making. pp. 18-27.
 - Section IV. Ethical issues in nursing. pp. 28-43.
 - Section V. Overview of law in society and healthcare. pp. 44-53.
- 5) Coleman, Jules L. 1992. *Risks and Wrongs*. Cambridge : CUP.
 - Preface. pp. ix-xi.
 - Acknowledgements. xiii-xvii.
 - Introduction. 1-13.
 - Ch. 1. Rationality and cooperation. pp. 17-43.
 - Ch. 3. Law and markets. pp. 73-86.
- 6) Delmas-Marty, Mireille. (ed.) 1992. (translated by Chodkiewicz, Christine) *The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights: International Protection Versus National Restrictions*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
 - Acknowledgements. p. xv.
 - General introduction. (by Mireille Delmas-Marty) pp. 1-3.

- Introduction. (by Mireille Delmas-Marty and Gerard Soulier) pp. 7-14.
 - Ch. 3. The press. (by Christian Jacq and Francis Teitgen) pp. 59-81.
 - Ch. 4. Public morals. (by Renee Koeling-Joulin) pp. 83-98.
- 7) Douzinas, Costas, Warrington, Ronnie and Shaun McVeigh. 1991. *Postmodern Jurisprudence. The Law of Text in the Texts of Law*. London: Routledge.
- Acknowledgements. vii.
 - Introduction. ix-xiii.
 - Ch. 1. From the classical polio to postmodern megapolis. pp. 3-28.
 - Ch. 2. From the book to the text. pp. 29-51.
- 8) Moore, Michael S. 1993. *Act and Crime. The Philosophy of Action and Its Implications for Criminal Law*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Preface. pp. vii-ix.
 - Introduction. pp. 1-14.
 - Ch. 2. The doctrinal unity of the act requirement. pp. 17-43.
- 9) Nerhot, Patrick. (ed.) 1990. *Law, Interpretation and Reality. Essays in Epistemology, Hermeneutics and Jurisprudence*. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Introduction. (by Patrick Nerhot) pp. 1-8.
 - Part 1. The law and its reality. Section 1: legal aspect of reality.
 - a) Facts and law. (by William Wilson) pp. 11-22.
 - b) The facts and the law. (by Michel Troper) pp. 22-37.
 - c) The concept of fact in legal science. (by Francois Rigaux) pp. 38-49.
- 10) Vincenzi, Christopher and David Marrington. 1992. *Immigration Law. The Rules Explained*. London: Sweet and Maxwell.
- Introduction. p. xxiii.
 - Immigration rules. pp. 1-8.
 - Ch. 1. Control on entry. pp. 9-43.
 - Ch. 12. Nationals of European Community Countries and their families. pp. 210-222.

III Linguistics

- 1) Bagnall, Nicholas. 1993. *Newspaper Language*. Oxford: Focal Press (imprint of Butterworth-Heinemann).
- Preface. p. vii.
 - Ch. 1. What is newspaper English? pp. 1-15.
 - Ch. 2. Journalism and journalese. pp. 16-22.
 - Ch. 3. Writing for the tabloids. pp. 23-43.
 - Ch. 4. Ways to start a story. pp. 44-51.

Note: In Ch. 11 "Grammar" the author mentions among other points:

In the interests of sexual equality, it is no longer wise to say 'he' " in cases like these:

We ask the anonymous author, whoever he is, to declare himself to us.

No self respecting doctor would claim that he has never made a mistake.

'He' was all right when doctors were always men. Must we now say

We ask the anonymous author, whoever he or she is, to declare him or herself to us;?

Of course not. We say:

We ask the anonymous author, whoever they are, to declare themselves to us.

Do not listen to anyone who complains that '*they* is plural so you can't have it after a singular'. They are just being old-fashioned. Too old-fashioned. (p.195)

2) Baker, Mona 1992. *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*.

London: Routledge.

- Preface. pp. ix-x.
- Acknowledgements.
- Introduction. pp. 1-9.
- Ch. 4. Grammatical equivalence.
 - a) 4.2.2. Gender. pp. 90-94.
- Ch. 7. Pragmatic equivalence. pp. 217-260.

NOTE: In the paragraph on gender Baker mentions that:

There is now a conscious attempt to replace the unmarked masculine form he in English with forms such as s/he, he or she, and him or her. This is particularly true of academic writing. (p. 91)

3) Blakemore, Diane 1992. *Understanding Utterances*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Preface pp. ix-x.
- Ch. 1. Communication and the context. pp. 1-23.
- Ch. 2. Relevance. pp. 24-38.
- Ch. 3. Pragmatics, linguistics and literature. pp. 39-53.

NOTE: Blakemore explains her pronoun policy in the preface:

I have referred to the speaker as he and the hearer as she. This decision has no intended contextual implications. I also use the term speaker to cover both speakers and writers, and the term hearer to cover both hearers and readers. (p. x)

Checking other chapters I found out that other antecedents and other pronoun forms are used. I decide to include all examples into the corpus.

4) Cameron Deborah, Frazer Elizabeth , Harvery Penelope, M.B.H.

Rampton, and Kay Richardson. 1992. *Researching Language*. London: Routledge.

- Acknowledgements. p. ix.

- Ch. 1. Introduction. pp. 1-28.
- Ch. 2. Scope for empowerment in sociolinguistics. pp. 29-61.

NOTE: Deborah Cameron usually uses 'she' in generic reference, as explained in her *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*. (1985 and 1992)

5) Fasold, Ralph 1990. *The Sociolinguistics of Language*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Introduction. pp. vii-x.
- Ch. 1. Address forms. pp. 1-38.
- Ch. 2. The ethnography of speaking. pp. 39-64.

NOTE: Fasold discusses the generic problem in Ch.4. Language and sex. (pp. 111-117).

6) Fowler, Roger 1991. *Language in the News*. London: Routledge.

- Acknowledgements. p. xi.
- Ch. 1. Introduction. pp. 1-9.
- Ch. 2. The social construction of news. pp. 10-24.
- Ch. 3. Language and representation. pp. 25-45.

7) Hodge, Robert and Gunther Kress. 1993. *Language as Ideology*. (2nd ed.) London: Routledge.

- Preface. pp. vii-viii.
- Preface to the second edition. pp. ix-iv.
- Ch. 1. The scope of linguistics. pp. 1-14.
- Ch. 9. Reading power. pp. 153-213.

NOTE: The authors explain that apart from the last chapter (Ch. 9), the second edition is almost unchanged. I decided to check the first (possibly unchanged) and last (new) chapters and compare the pronoun usage.

8) Holmes, Janet. 1992. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Longman.

- Preface. p. x.
- Author's acknowledgements. p. xii.
- Ch. 1. What do sociolinguists study? pp. 1-17.
- Ch. 2. Language choice in multilingual communities. 18-54.

9) Milroy, James and Leslie Milroy. 1991. *Authority in Language: Investigating Language Prescription and Standardization*. (2nd ed.) London: Routledge.

- Preface. pp. vii-ix.
- Preface to the second edition. pp. x-xi.
- Ch. 1. Prescription and standardization. pp. 1-28.
- Ch. 8. Some practical implications of prescriptivism: the linguistic adequacy of language assessment procedures. pp. 158-175.

10) Thomas, George. 1991. *Linguistics Purism*. London: Longman.

- Preface. pp. xi-xiii.
- Ch. 1. Introduction. pp. 1-18.
- Ch. 2. The imagery of purism. pp. 19-34.
- Ch. 6. The social organization of puristic intervention. pp. 100-114.

IV Medicine

1) Abraham, Suzanne and Derek Llewellyn-Jones. 1992. *Eating Disorders: The Facts*. (3rd ed.) Oxford: OUP.

- Preface and acknowledgement. pp. v-vi.
- Ch. 1. Adolescent eating behaviour. pp. 1-13.
- Ch. 2. Eating disorders. pp. 14-27.
- Ch. 3. Why do eating disorders occur? pp. 28-39.

NOTE: The authors explain their pronoun policy in the preface:

Because of the problems of gender in the English language, we have had to decide whether to use 'he' or 'she' when referring to people. We feel that to use 'person' in each instance is distracting. As we treat more women than men, and as more women than men develop eating disorders, we have chosen to use she rather than he in all instances. The reader should not deduce that we have any sexist bias. (p. v).

A check in several chapters showed the existence of other antecedents (*someone*) or even other pronoun forms than those mentioned (*he or she*).

2) Benjamin, Martin and Joy Curtis. 1992. (3rd ed.). *Ethics in Nursing*. Oxford: OUP.

- Preface. pp. vii-viii.
- Preface to the first edition. pp. ix-xi.
- Ch. 1. Moral dilemmas and ethical inquiry. pp. 3-25.
- Ch. 2. Unavoidable topics in ethical theory. pp. 26-51.

3) Chadwick, Ruth and Win Tadd. 1992. *Ethics and Nursing Practice*. Houndmills: Macmillan.

- Foreword. pp. iv-v. (by Reginald H. Pryne)
- Acknowledgements. p. vi.
- Introduction. pp. vii-x.
- Ch. 1. Introduction. pp. 3-16.
- Ch. 2. The nurse-patient relationship. pp. 17-36.
- Ch. 4. The nurse-doctor relationship. pp. 49-62.
- Ch. 7. Nursing the child. pp. 96-110.

NOTE: The authors explain their pronoun policy in the preface:

The convention used throughout the text, in relation to gender, is that the nurse is referred to as 'she' and others such as the patient or client as 'he', unless the discussion is about an already identified

client. This is not only to avoid the use of clumsy he/she references and does not in any way indicate a value belief on the part of the authors, or indeed a lack of awareness of the growing number of male nurses. (p. x).

However, some chapters checked revealed that other pronoun forms are used as well. All the examples found are included in the corpus.

- 4) Downie Robert Silcock, Charlton Bruce, Calman, K.C. and James McCormick. 1992. *The Making of a Doctor: Medical Education in Theory and Practice*. Oxford: OUP.
 - Foreword. pp. v-vi.
 - Ch. 1. Introduction: stating the problem. pp. 1-5.
 - Ch. 2. Gentlemen, tradesmen, and technicians: a brief history of medical education. pp. 9-27.
 - Ch. 3. Aims and aptitudes: what is the good doctor good at? pp. 28-47.
- 5) Illingworth, Ronald S. 1991. *The Normal Child*. (10th ed.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone.
 - Foreword. p. v.
 - Preface to the tenth edition. pp. vii-viii.
 - Introduction: the importance of knowing the normal. pp. 1-2.
 - Ch. 1. Normal breastfeeding - physiology, chemistry and advantages. pp. 3-15.
 - Ch. 21. Miscellaneous behavioural problems. pp. 317-337.
 - Ch. 26. Helping children to achieve their potential. pp. 397-408.
- 6) Jacobsen, Wayne K. (ed.) 1992. *Manual of Post Anesthesia Care*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company.
 - Preface.
 - Ch. 1. The neurologia system. (by Daniel J. Cole) pp. 1-11.
 - Ch. 13. Recovery of the pediatric patient. (by Linda J. Mason) pp. 146-159.
 - Ch. 14. Obstetric and gynecologic recovery. (by Randall M. Schell, Richard L. Applegate) pp. 160-179.
 - Ch. 18. Discharge from the PACU. (by Richard L. Applegate) pp. 212-223.
- 7) Modell, Bernadette and Michael Modell. 1992. *Towards a Healthy Baby. Congenital Disorders and the New Genetics*. Oxford: OUP.
 - Preface. pp. v-vii.
 - Ch. 1. Genetics and primary health care. pp. 1-8.
 - Ch. 2. Genetics and DNA. pp. 11-32.
 - Ch. 3. Cell division: an opportunity for change. pp. 33-41.
 - Ch. 4. Fertilization and embryonic development. pp. 42-53.

- 8) Morton, Rosemary J. and Barbara M. Phillips. 1992. *Accidents and Emergencies in Children*. Oxford: OUP.
 - Preface.
 - Ch. 1. Children in the Accident and Emergency department. pp. 1-10.
 - Ch. 8. Child abuse. pp. 175-189.
 - Ch. 12. Skin and infectious diseases. pp. 267-280.
 - Ch. 15. Common parental anxieties. pp. 305-312.
- 9) Wright, Stephen G. 1990. *My Patient - My Nurse. A Guide to Primary Nursing*. London: Scutari Press.
 - Foreword. pp. ix-x.
 - Preface. pp. xi-xii.
 - Ch. 1. The essence of primary nursing. pp. 1-12.
 - Ch. 2. Changing the primary nursing. pp. 13- 22.
 - Ch. 3. The role of nurse and patient in primary nursing. pp. 23-36.
 - Ch. 6. Review and conclusion. pp. 93-104.
- 10) Young, Ian D. 1991. *Introduction to Risk Calculation in Genetic Counselling*. Oxford: OUP.
 - Preface. pp. v-vi.
 - Ch. 1. Probability and genetic counselling. pp. 1-6.
 - Ch. 2. Balanced chromosome rearrangements. pp. 7-32.
 - Ch. 3. Autosomal dominance inheritance. pp. 33-53.

V Social Sciences, Sociology and Psychology.

a) Psychology

- 1) Baron Robert S., Kerr Norbert L. and Norman Miller. 1992. *Group Process, Group Decision, Group Action*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
 - Foreword. p. x
 - Preface. p. xiii.
 - Acknowledgements. p. xv.
 - Ch. 1. Introduction. pp. 1-15.
 - Ch. 2. Social facilitation. pp. 16-30.
 - Ch. 3. Individual versus group performance. pp. 31-45.
 - Ch. 4. Group motivation losses. pp. 46-59.
- 2) Elliott, Patricia. 1991. *From Mastery to Analysis: Theories of Gender in Psychoanalytic Feminism*. Ithaca: Cornell UP.
 - Foreword. pp. vii-ix.
 - Engendering psychoanalytic discourse: an introduction. pp. 1-24.
 - Ch. 1. Desire, deception and the feminine thing.

- a) The case of Mrs G. pp. 25-51.
- 3) O'Connor, Joseph and John Seymour. 1993. *Introducing Neuro-linguistic Programming*. (rev. ed.) London: The Aquarian Press. (imprint of Harper Collins).
- Foreward. p. ix.
 - Preface. p. x.
 - Introduction. pp. xii-xiii.
 - Introduction to the second edition. pp. xv-xvi.
 - Ch. 1. What is neuro-linguistic programming? pp. 1-23.
 - Ch. 2. The doors of perception. pp. 24-48.
- b) Social sciences
- 4) Anthias, Floya. 1992. *Ethnicity, Class, Gender and Migration. Greek Cypriots in Britain*. Aldershot: Avebury Academic Publishers.
- Preface. p. viii.
 - Ch. 1. The migration and settlement of Greek-Cypriots in Britain. pp. 1-9.
 - Ch. 2. Current issues in the sociology of ethnicity and race. pp. 10-32.
 - Ch. 3. Contextualising Greek-Cypriots in economic and ethnic relations in Cyprus. pp. 33-50.
- 5) Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava and David Nachmias. 1992. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. (4th ed.) London: Edward Arnold.
- Preface. pp. vii-x.
 - Ch. 1. The scientific approach. pp. 3-26.
 - Ch. 4. Ethics in social-science research. pp. 73-94.
- 6) Jenkins, Richard. 1992. *Key Sociologists. Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge.
- Acknowledgements. pp. 7-8.
 - Ch. 1. A book for reading. pp. 9-23.
 - Ch. 3. Experiments in epistemology. pp. 45- 65.
 - Ch. 7. Uses of language. 152-174.
- c) Sociology
- 7) Bury, Michael and Anthea Holme. 1991. *Life After Ninety*. London: Routledge.
- Foreword. pp. vii-x.
 - Acknowledgement. pp. xi-xiv.
 - Introduction. pp. 1-7.
 - Ch. 2. The people introduced. pp. 22-44.
 - Ch. 7. Dependency and choice. pp. 118-132.
 - Ch. 9. The issues discussed. pp. 154-164.

- 8) Cole, Thomas, R. 1992. *The Journey of Life. A Cultural History of Aging in America*. Cambridge: CUP.
 - Preface. pp. xi-xiv.
 - Introduction. pp. xv-xxxv.
 - Ch. 1. Aging in the western tradition: cultural origin of the modern life course. pp. 3-31.
 - Ch. 2. The aging pilgrim's progress in the New World. pp. 32-47.
- 9) Hughes, Christina. 1991. *Stepparents: Wicked or Wonderful?* Aldershot: Avebury Academic Publishers.
 - Acknowledgements. p. vi.
 - Introduction. pp. vii-x.
 - Ch. 1. Stepfamily concerns. pp. 1-21.
 - Ch. 6. Wickedness: the prerogative of stepparents. pp. 120-145.
 - Ch. 7. Wicked or wonderful? The stepfamily today. pp. 146-153.
- 10) Szinovacz Maximiliane, Ekerdt David J. and Barbara H. Vinick. (eds) 1992. *Families and Retirement*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
 - Foreword. pp. xi-xiii.
 - Acknowledgements. p. xv
 - Ch. 1. Families and retirement. Conceptual and methodological issues. (by Szinovacz, M., Ekerdt, D. J. and B. Vinick) pp. 1-19.
 - Ch. 4. Family provisions in Old-Age pensions. Twenty industrial nations. (by Regina O'Grady-LeShane and John Williamson) pp. 64-77.
 - Ch. 9. Retirement and marital satisfaction. (by Robert C. Atchley) pp. 145- 158.

A P P E N D I X 2

A LETTER TO THE EDITORS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Beata Ozieblowska
Research Student
Department of English Language
University of Glasgow
12 University Gardens
GLASGOW G12 9NA

12 August, 1994

Editor

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a research student at Glasgow University in the Department of English Language. As part of my research I am observing today's generic pronoun usage in different publications. I would like to find out which of the forms, he, he or she, they, is preferred by the authors.

I understand that in many cases the pronoun usage may result from a publisher's editorial policy. Therefore, I would be very grateful for any information concerning the editorial policy in your company and particularly whether you have any generic pronoun guidelines for the authors and the editors.

Thank you for considering my request.

Yours sincerely,

Beata Ozieblowska

Simon & Schuster International Group
 Campus 101
 MacLands Avenue
 Boreham Wood, Hemel Hempstead
 Herts, HP22 3JZ, England
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19th February 1993

Ms Beata Ozieblowska
 Research Student
 University of Glasgow
 Department of English Language
 12 University Gardens
 Glasgow
 G12 8QQ

Dear Ms Ozieblowska

Thank you for writing to us about your research into pronoun usage.

In the English Language Teaching Department this is something that we are very much concerned about, as we respond to the increased importance that is attached to the treatment of gender in ELT books. I enclose a photocopy of the relevant section from Simon & Schuster International's guidelines to authors. This is circulated to all authors of Prentice Hall, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Ellis Horwood and Woodhead Faulkner imprints, (all the Simon and Schuster academic imprints operating from the UK) and would be implemented by our copy editors where the authors have failed to comply. You see that 'their' is considered acceptable.

Depending on the style of the writing, 'she/he' is sometimes acceptable. A typical example might be rubrics of exercises or in extreme cases where no other remedy is preferable and 'he or she' is too long. I also enclose for you the booklet 'On Balance' which is produced by 'Women in EFL Materials' in conjunction with the Publishers Association EFL Committee. These are the guidelines we follow and other ELT publishers do also.

We are bringing out a book towards the end of the year called 'Exploring Gender: Questions and Implications for English Language Education'. This is a collection of papers from very disparate authors and one section concentrates on grammatical usage. I shall pass your letter on to the editor of this book Jane Sunderland.

The bibliography of the 'On Balance' leaflet will no doubt help you, and the organisation 'Women in EFL' will be helpful too.

Thank you for contacting us. May I wish you the very best with your research.

Yours sincerely

Isobel Fletcher de Tellez

Isobel Fletcher de Tellez
 DEVELOPMENT EDITOR

AUTHOR GUIDE

2.11 Libel/sexism/racism

Libel

Your contract contains a clause concerning libel. You should ensure that your book contains no libellous, defamatory or injurious statement about living persons, institutions or other organisations. Please consult your acquisitions editor if you are in doubt about this.

Sexism

You should avoid using language that reinforces sexism. Your writing should be free of unwarranted bias towards one gender or the other, for example depicting women as only ever secretaries, wives or mothers. Of course the context in which a statement is made will have a bearing on its content.

In some cases it is quite simple to avoid sexist usage, for example by:

1. omitting the generic pronoun (he, his, him);
2. substituting the definite or indefinite article (the, a, an);
3. using plural nouns;
4. utilising 'gender-neutral' terms, e.g. chairperson, police officer etc.;
5. rewording.

However, common sense must prevail and clumsy, cumbersome or grammatically incorrect sentence structure should be avoided. Wherever possible resist the use of 'he or she', 'he/she', alternating these two pronouns or using 'their' when referring to one person; instead consistently use 'he' or 'she' and include a note in your preface explaining usage.

Racism

You should avoid offensive designations and bigoted or biased statements towards groups of people due to the colour of their skin, their country of origin or their religious beliefs.

SIMON & SCHUSTER
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 DIVISION



Sharon Duckworth
Editorial Manager (Books)

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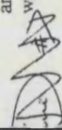
3 Text style and copy-editing rules

GENERAL STYLE

Edit out any awkwardnesses in the text which might disturb the reader's flow of understanding. However remember also the author's moral right of integrity and draw his/her attention to heavily edited material.

Look out for:

- inconsistent/inappropriate use of we/I;
 - assumptions that the reader is reading at a particular time, or in a particular region or country, e.g. 'at the moment here, we ...' (ekk);
 - statements which indicate that the material was written for another purpose - 'In this paper we explain ...'; or 'This thesis limits itself to ...';
 - use of long (pomposus?) words when simple ones will do - utilize (use), maintained (kept), initial (first);
 - split infinitives; but be careful here, don't be too pedantic - if the meaning is unambiguous don't change it.
 - over-long or complex sentences - break them down into shorter clearer ones.
 - sexist language - the *Chapman & Hall Guide for Authors* states 'It is our policy not to publish material which we deem to be sexist, racist or prejudicial in any way.' As copy-editor you must identify and re-write all such material. Sexist writing is probably found most commonly of all such prejudices. Replace mankind (humans, humanity, people); man-made (artificial, synthetic); manpower (workforce, staff, human resources); the man (the person, the individual); the nurse ... she ... (nurses ... they); the accountant ... he (accountants ... they). The NUJ has a set of guidelines for this purpose - we would be happy to send you notes if you request.
- Remember to draw the author's attention to the changes you have made in this respect.



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4 May 1993

Beata Ozieblowska
University of Glasgow
Department of English Language
12 University Gardens
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G12 8QQ

Dear Beata Ozieblowska

Thank you for your letter concerning your research into generic pronoun usage. We publish high level professional and academic textbooks which generally avoid the use of personal pronouns, and therefore the question of generic pronoun usage does not often arise.

As a result, I am unable to help you with your research.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Anderson

Dr Lesley M Anderson
House Editor

ROUTLEDGE

**INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
AUTHORS**



He/she Avoid the use of 'he' (when he or she is meant), either through the use of 'they' or by repeating the noun if possible.

9

Re: Yr letter of 12 Feb 93
11 New Fetter Lane
London EC4P 4EE
Telephone: 071-583 9855
Telex: 263398 ROUT
Fax: 071-583 0701

The only instruction we
give to authors is on page 9
of the booklet. We avoid
sexist language wherever possible
but authors don't always comply.

Hope this helps

Sarah Plessall. With compliments
(Senior Editorial Manager)



Robert Stevenson House
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**CHURCHILL
LIVINGSTONE**

Beata Ozieblowska
University of Glasgow
Dept of English Language
12 University Gardens
Glasgow
G12 8QQ

24 February 1993

Dear Ms. Ozieblowska

Thank you for your letter of the 12th February, which has been passed on to me for reply.

There is no editorial policy at Churchill Livingstone regarding the use of the generic pronoun. Having said that, I think it is also true to say that insofar as management consider these matters at all they would be sympathetic to a policy which aimed at a fairer use of he and she. It is very much left up to individual editors, who will either choose to do nothing and leave the author's style as it is (often a wise course with our authors, as I will explain), or introduce their own non-specific terms.

In speaking to two of my editorial colleagues, I find that we try to use 'he or she' where possible, but the preference is to avoid specific pronouns altogether - that is, to refer to 'the patient' or 'the clinician' where we can.

Churchill Livingstone publish medical books, both undergraduate textbooks and postgraduate reference works. Medicine is a male-dominated profession and it is rare to find a medic who is sensitive to the issue of sexist language. Our books are seldom heavily edited in the sense that, say, academic books or fiction may be. Equally, one has to be aware that certain medical conditions are inherently gender-specific, so that in an obstetrics textbook the patient will obviously be she, and in discussing certain types of heart condition it is quite reasonable to use 'he'.

Without exception, we all abhor the use of 's/he' and try to avoid the sticky mess which is political correctness.

I hope this information is useful to you.

Yours sincerely

Phil Jones
Dilly Jones
Senior Project Editor



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5 March 1993

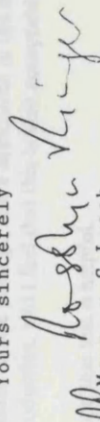
Beata Ozieblowska
Dept of English Language
University of Glasgow
12 University Gardens
GLASGOW G12 8QQ

Dear Ms Ozieblowska

Thank you for your letter of 25 February.

I am afraid I can't help you as we have no particular policy - it depends very much on the type of book being published.

Yours sincerely


Maureen S Leach
Copyeditorial Manager - Humanities



BLACKWELL
Publishers

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February 19, 1993

Beata Ozieblowska
Research Student
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Dear Beata Ozieblowska

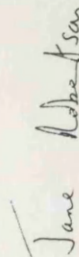
Thank you for your letter of 12 February 1993, enquiring about our policy on pronoun usage.

I am afraid I can't give any definitive answer on this subject. Usage by different authors varies enormously, although it would probably be fair to say that the majority of male authors still adopt the he/his pronoun, although we would probably tend to prefer the use of they which avoids the problem all together. Some of our authors are aware of this problem and, even if they don't tackle it in the text of their books, they might include a note in the prelims to highlight the fact that they have used either he/his or she/hers. We would generally prefer one or other to be used, and, as I say, preferably they, rather than a mixture of both, which can be rather confusing.

As I say, we don't have any definitive generic pronoun guidelines for our authors at present, but this may be something we will think about advising our authors on in future.

I hope this has been of some help to you.

Yours sincerely



Jane Robertson
Managing Editor



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Beata Ozieblowska
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14 April 1993

Dear Ms Ozieblowska

Thank you for your letter of 12 February - and my apologies for this delayed response to it. I hope that you are still engaged in the research which you described in your letter!

We have no firm editorial policy on the use of pronouns; however, we do have a policy of avoiding sexism in language, and would certainly make changes during editing (with the author's consent) if the author had used either the masculine or the feminine pronoun exclusively and without justification. My own preference is for **they**, and for avoidance of the clumsy **he/she** or **(s)he**. Some authors prefer to use a feminine pronoun in one passage, and a masculine in the next, with some explanatory note in the introduction, and I feel that this is also acceptable.

I hope that this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Oliver Gadsby
Director, Educational Publishing

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24th February 1993

Ms Beata Ozieblowska
Research Student
University of Glasgow
Dept of English Language
12 University Gardens
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G12 8QQ

Dear Ms Ozieblowska

Thank you for your letter of February 12th. We are an academic publisher working in the fields of Medicine, Science and Humanities and our policy is usually to use **they**. In a book on Engine Technology we may excuse the odd **he** since the main readership will be male City and Guilds students.

We often insert the following note to the preliminary material:


The manuscript should be read in the understanding that, unless the contrary intention appears, words importing the masculine gender include the feminine and words importing the feminine gender include the masculine.

I do hope this is of help to you.

Best Wishes.

Yours sincerely

Diane Leadbetter-Conway
Editorial Manager
Edward Arnold

 HarperCollins Publishers

9 August 1993

Ms Beata Ozieblowska
Research Student
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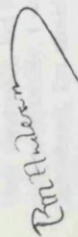
Dear Ms Ozieblowska

Thank you for your letter of 21 July.

Our editorial policy concerning generic pronoun usage is to use he/she and him/her wherever possible.

I enclose a photocopy of the relevant page of our 'Guidelines for Editors and Authors' booklet for further interest.

Yours sincerely


PETER ANDERSON
ELT Senior Publisher
B496-PA/dr

* Sorry, this is no longer available

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19 February 1993

Beata Ozieblowska
University of Glasgow
Department of English Language
12 University Gardens
Glasgow G12 8QQ

Dear Miss Ozieblowska,

Collins ELT has been sold to Thomas Nelson. If your enquiry relates to text books you must redirect it to them.

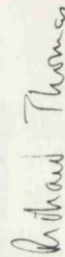
With regard to dictionaries the problem of choice has really only arisen with the explanatory style in our COBUILD series. You will see from the text extracts in the enclosed catalogue that we have a variety of strategies of which the main one is to use you, followed by someone and they. We occasionally resort to he or she but it is horribly cumbersome if used repeatedly, as it would need to be in a reference book.

Each editorial team will devise its own policy which will vary through time and from project to project. Certainly there are no company guidelines, nor should there be. Some authors have their own predilections and the particular editor may or may not find these acceptable.

I hope this information helps. The Bank of English gives us massive evidence of typical modern usage in this and other language areas.

With best wishes for success in your research and studies.

Yours sincerely,



RICHARD THOMAS
Managing Director
Collins Dictionaries

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22nd February 1993.

Miss B. Ozieblowska,
Research Student,
University of Glasgow,
Dept. of English Language,
12 University Gardens,
Glasgow G12 8QQ.

Dear Beata,

Your letter of 12th February addressed to André Deutsch came in to our offices by accident. It has been passed on to Scholastic Press (André Deutsch Children's Books) who occupy the same building as ourselves. We are also publishers, so I am replying to your letter.

We do not really have an editorial policy on 'he', 'he' or 'she' or 'they'. Some of our freelance editors (female, not male!), do get concerned about this and try and impose 'he or she' or 'they' rigorously, but it sometimes makes very clumsy reading. In general, if 'they' can be used comfortably, I would adopt this. If a text is referring to a 'clinician' (we are medical publishers), I'm afraid I'd tend to use 'he' - in other words, leave it as the author is most likely to have presented it.

I hope this is of some help to you in your research project.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Alison V.M. Campbell
Managing Editor

P.S. I think s/he is an abomination!

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TF/JD

3 March 1993

Beata Ozieblowska
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Dear Ms Ozieblowska

Thanks for your letter of 12 February.

I assume your enquiry relates to the problem encountered in English by the need for a third-person singular pronoun to be gender-specific. It creates no end of problems at the editorial stage!

On the whole we prefer to allow our authors to follow the usage they prefer (as long as they do it consistently) but we would step in if we felt that a sexist bias was emerging.

We would prefer authors not to be ungrammatical (for instance, using 'they' with a singular form of a verb) but would much prefer them to recast sentences into the plural. 'He or she' is clumsy if used throughout a book. 'S/he' is ungainly.

We encourage authors to explain in a Preface or a note when the first singular pronoun occurs which convention is going to be followed through the book.

The majority of these comments apply to high level (further education, higher education and postgraduate) books and we would be much more careful at school level.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely

Timothy Fox
Director
Publishing Services
Higher Education Division

The Macmillan Press Ltd

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TABLES

FREQUENCY OF GENERIC PRONOUNS FOUND IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS

TABLE 1. Economics

TABLE 2. Law

TABLE 3. Linguistics

TABLE 4. Medicine

TABLE 5. Social sciences, sociology and psychology

LEGEND:

- SHE (1) - sexist usage of generic *she* (*she* used in coreference to female-related antecedents like *nurse* or *secretary*)
- SHE (2) - nonsexist usage of generic *she*
- TOTAL % - mean percentage of pronoun occurrences in the domain =

$$\frac{\text{percentage of pronoun occurrences per book}}{\text{number of books}}$$

TABLE 2 Law

AUTHOR(S)	HE		SHE (1)		SHE(2)		IT		THEY		HE/SHE		SHE/HE		S/HE		OTHER		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bird	83	83.84	13	13.13	-	-	2	2.02	-	-	1	1.01	-	-	-	-	-	-	99	
Blackburn	15	37.50	-	-	10	25	-	-	-	-	15	37.50	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	
Burton	4	30.77	-	-	3	23.08	-	-	1	7.69	5	38.46	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	
Catalano	10	83.33	2	16.66	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	
Coleman	11	29.73	-	-	16	43.24	-	-	-	-	9	24.32	1	2.7	-	-	-	-	37	
Delmas-Marty	9	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	
Douzinat et al	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	66.66	1	33.33	-	-	-	-	3	
Moore	17	80.95	-	-	4	19.05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	
Nerhot	22	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	
Vincenzi...	81	89.01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8.79	-	-	1	1.09	1	1.09	91	
TOTAL	252	63.51	15	2.98	33	11.04	2	0.20	1	0.77	40	17.67	2	3.6	1	0.11	1	0.11	347	

TABLE 3 Linguistics

AUTHOR(S)	HE		SHE (1)		SHE (2)		IT		THEY		HE/SHE		SHE/HE		S/HE		OTHER		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bagnall	5	33.33	-	-	2	13.33	-	-	4	26.66	4	26.66	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-
Baker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	44.83	-	-	16	55.17	-	-	29	-
Blakemore	34	50.75	-	-	28	41.79	-	-	5	7.46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	-
Cameron	-	-	-	-	15	71.43	-	-	6	28.57	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	-
Fasold	6	13.95	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	11.63	32	74.42	-	-	-	-	-	-	43	-
Fowler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	33.33	3	33.33	1	11.11	2	22.22	-	-	9	-
Hodge...	4	44.44	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	11.11	4	44.44	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-
Holmes	2	18.18	-	-	2	18.18	-	-	6	54.55	-	-	-	-	1	9.09	-	-	11	-
Milroy...	15	93.75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6.25	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	-
Thomas	17	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	-
TOTAL	83	35.44	-	-	47	14.47	-	-	30	17.33	57	22.99	1	1.11	19	8.65	-	-	237	-

TABLE 4 Medicine

AUTHOR(S)	HE		SHE (1) ¹		SHE (2)		IT		THEY		HE/SHE		SHE/HE		S/HE		OTHER		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Abraham	-	-	-	-	6	60	-	-	2	20	-	-	2	20	-	-	-	-	10	
Benjamin...	5	23.81	8	38.09	2	9.52	-	-	-	-	6	28.57	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	
Chadwick...	27	36.00	31	41.33	1	1.33	-	-	14	18.67	2	2.67	-	-	-	-	-	-	75	
Downie	8	57.14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	42.86	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	
Illingworth	122	98.39	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	124	
Jacobsen	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	
Modell...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	
Morton...	26	83.87	-	-	1	3.22	-	-	-	-	3	9.68	1	3.22	-	-	-	-	31	
Wright	10	35.71	12	42.86	1	3.57	-	-	-	-	5	17.85	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	
Young	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	
TOTAL	204	43.49	51	12.23	11	7.76	-	-	23	14.03	26	20.16	3	2.32	-	-	-	-	318	

TABLE 5 Social Sciences, Psychology, Sociology.

AUTHOR(S)	HE		SHE (1)		SHE (2)		IT		THEY		HE/SHE		SHE/HE		S/HE		OTHER		TOTAL
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Baron...	6	22.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	11.11	11	40.74	7	25.93	-	-	-	-	27
Elliot	2	18.18	-	-	3	27.27	-	-	-	-	5	45.45	1	9.09	-	-	-	-	11
O'Connor...	11	24.44	-	-	3	6.67	-	-	26	57.78	5	11.11	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
Anthias	3	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Nachmias	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Jenkins	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16.66	5	83.33	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Bury...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	85.71	1	14.29	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Cole	2	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2-	50	4
Hughes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	75	1	25.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Szinovacz...	-	-	-	-	1	7.69	-	-	-	-	12	92.31	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
TOTAL	24	21.48	-	-	7	4.16	-	-	39	22.96	47	42.89	8	3.50	-	-	2	5	127

FIGURES

- FIGURE 1. Generic and specific reference**
- FIGURE 2. Generic antecedents**
- FIGURE 3. Examples illustrating the gradience of genericity**

FIGURE 1. Generic and specific reference.

(References which are of concern in this study appear in bold type)

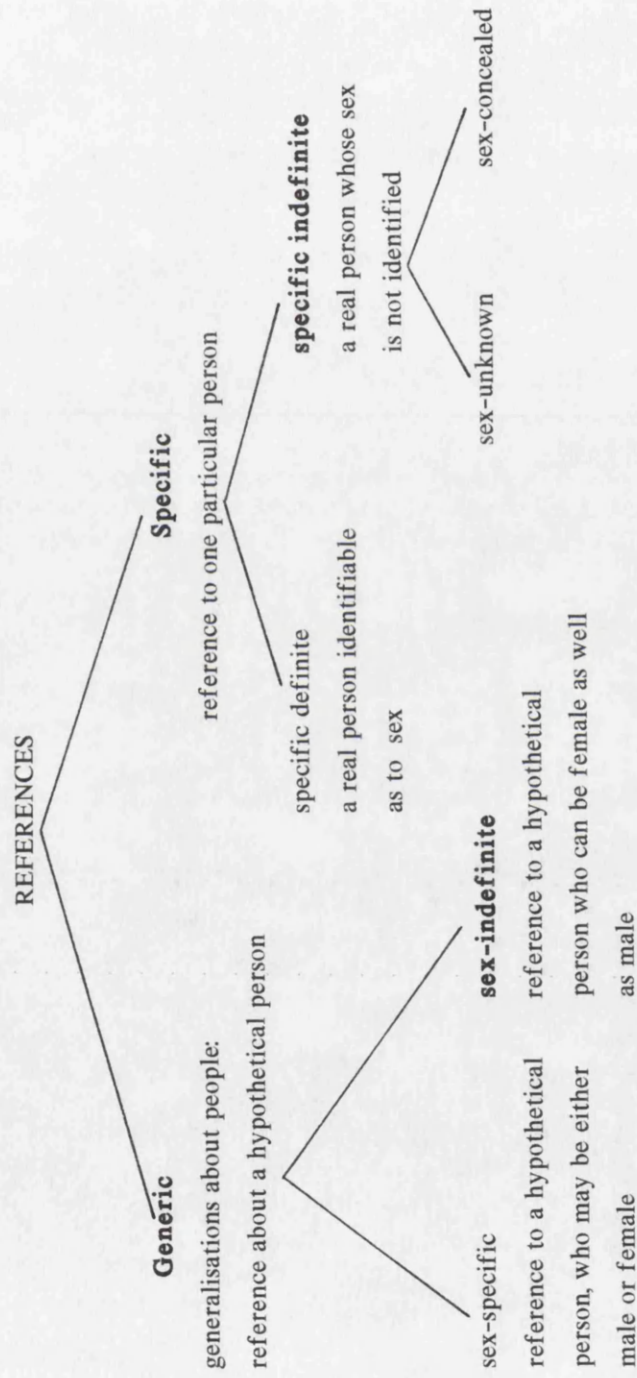
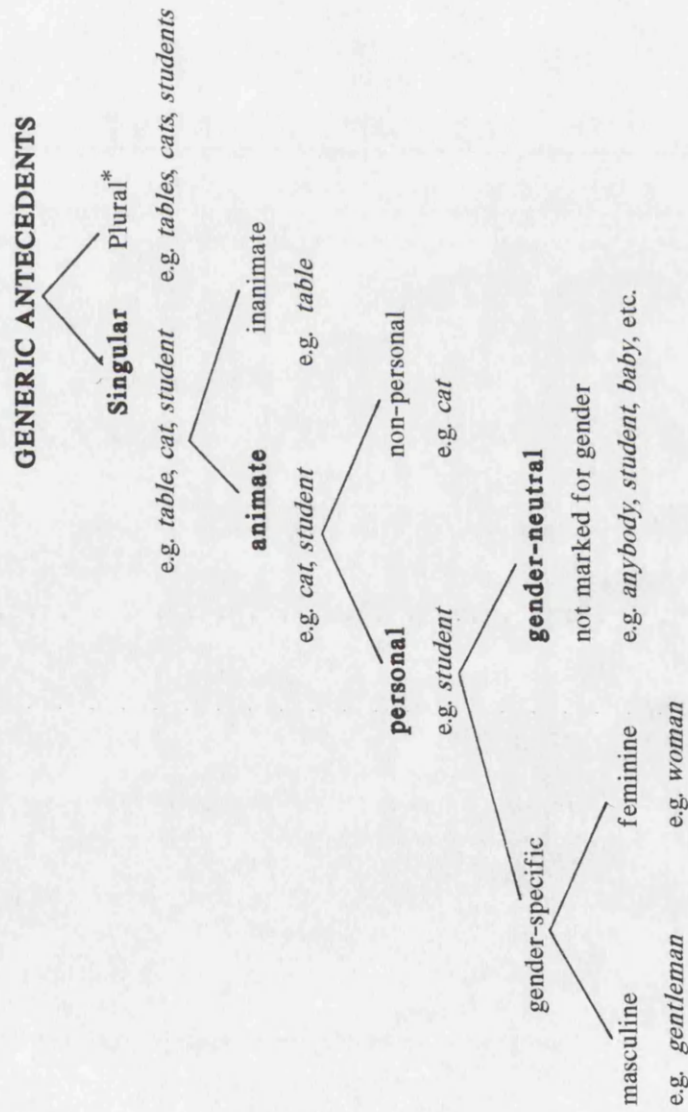


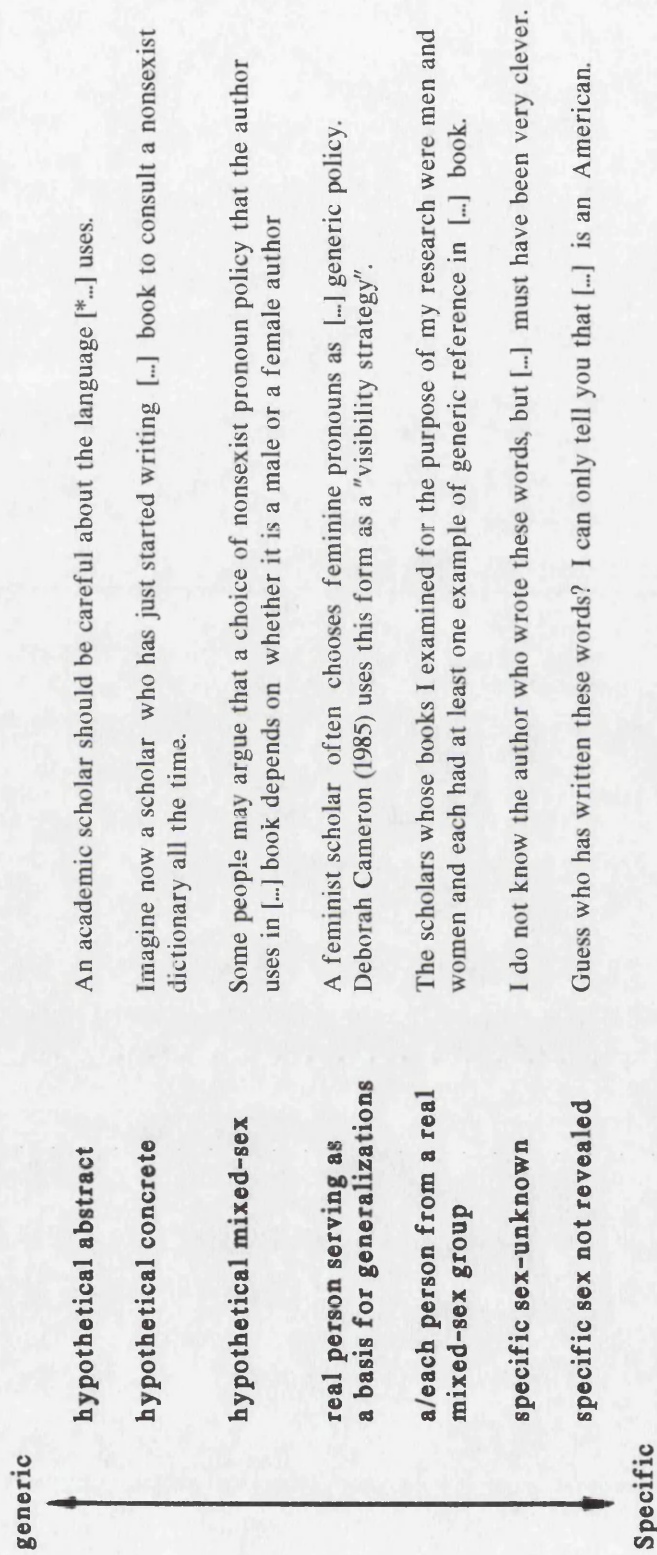
FIGURE 2. Generic antecedents.

(Generic antecedents which are discussed in this study appear in bold type)



* Antecedents, which appear in the plural form can also be animate or inanimate, personal or non-personal. However, this distinction is not mentioned here because plural antecedents are not the subject of this dissertation.

FIGURE 3. Examples illustrating the gradience of genericity:



*The blanks stand for pronoun forms.

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